PRIVATE POLITICS

A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to 'Big-Man' Systems

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A Multi-Disciplinary Approach
to 'Big-Man' Systems

EDITED BY

Martin A. VAN BAKEL · Renée R. HAGESTEIJN · Pieter VAN DE VELDE

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To Professor
Henri J. M. Claessen

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The editors

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MARTIN VAN BAKEL, RENÉE HAGESTEIJN and PIETER VAN DE VELDE

INTRODUCTION

In political anthropology the term 'Big-Man' nowadays has come to denote a specific type of political leadership, characterised by authority derived from personal efforts and abilities through the allocation and reallocation of private resources (Claessen 1984, Sahlins 1963). The present volume is a collection of papers by social scientists from various backgrounds on Big-Man-like phenomena from all kinds of societies. The emphasis is on the private character of the goals associated with this type of leadership — hence the title of the book. The term 'Big-Man' is now being used outside the original ethnographic context of Melanesian societies as well; it is even diffusing to other disciplines as some of the papers in the present volume bear witness of.

In this volume, some of the old ideas and propositions associated with the 'Big-Man' concept will be substantiated and validated by new data. Moreover, the new data direct our attention to interesting new lines of research and to fundamental issues in political anthropology. Several contributions lead to a rephrasing of our questions and to a rethinking of previous theories. For example, the mutually exclusive relations with other 'types' of political leadership seem to be less clearcut than originally presumed. From a number of the analyses presented below the operational contrasts for differentiating between these types of political leadership — as proposed in the sixties and seventies — appear to be not equally valid. Thus, the well-known dichotomy 'chief' versus 'Big-Man' is under scrutiny; the boundaries between these and other types have become less obvious, when applied in empirical situations.

A related problem to be considered here is whether the concept can be fruitfully applied outside the Melanesian cultural area, that is away from its original ethnographic context. Various authors in this volume attempt to answer this question — based on a variety of data and with different results. Indeed, it is precisely these differences of opinion which may point a way out (see below, p. 6). However, neither we nor any of the other contributors to this volume propose a completely new definition of the 'Big-Man' concept; our purpose is more limited. A number of topical issues are considered in the articles that follow; and some new cases are presented. The collection thus provides an extension of the ongoing discussion on 'Big-Man' systems.

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A short History of the Concept

The history of the 'Big-Man' concept is quite instructive for its understanding. As is well-known, it has its origin in Melanesian ethnography. From an analysis of its development by Lindstrom (1981) it appears that the definition of the concept occurred through "a number of haphazard and unplanned choices made by many individual ethnographers" (Lindstrom 1981: 902). According to Lindstrom, missionaries and early ethnographers wrote about Melanesian political leaders as "chiefs" during the period of initial contact; some perceptive observers among them noted deviations from the expected qualities with that term, though. Later on, professional ethnographers similarly noting differences put the labels in quotes: 'chief' became "chief". The deviances gradually coalesced in a separate 'type' of political leadership, as Lindstrom shows. As he notes: "... "chief" remained as the label of those sorts of leaders with expected leadership qualities given a [romantic and monarchistic] European perspective while the ... [deviant] category evolved to encompass the Melanesian experience" (Lindstrom 1981: 901). I.e., as more Melanesian societies got their ethnographies, the sum of all described differences came to make up one single category, the 'Big-Man', conceived as an alternative to 'chief'.

As a term, 'Big-Man' is a translation of various indigenous Melanesian status labels; also, in Pidgin English 'bigfella man' is heard. Well into the sixties of this century competitors to the term can be found in the ethnographic literature; untranslated native, pidgin, and imported terms from other fields occur — from headman through 'Big-Man' to executive, and many more (Lindstrom 1981: 901). Gradually, 'chief' (with or without quotation marks) dropped out of use as a covering referent for political leaders *in general*: it became a separate category. The appearance of 'Big-Man' in the title of Sahlins' essay (1963) seems to mark the moment after which the alternative labels drop out of use.

Thus, 'Big-Man' became an expression for a concept which grouped the ethnographic deviances from a European notion under one heading; that these deviances came from different societies, each with their own differences, went unnoted. The attempt by Sahlins to define 'Big-Man' in opposition to chief in an ideal-type-fashion probably straightened out some of the built-in confusion. It did not come to grips with the fundamental problem, though: leadership in politics is as multifaceted as politics itself, it may emerge in different societies in different combinations of aspects. So, it is only to be expected that in modern Melanesia 'Big-Men' possess qualities different from the anthropological concept, as Lindstrom (1981: 903) observes. Chief and 'Big-Man' are in fact *emic*

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notions with different ethnic backgrounds, and neither ideal-typing nor rigorous definition can overcome this. Selection of aspects for opposition, highlighting the supposed contrast, is based on empirical generalizations. They may pertain in some societies, but usually not in all; other societies may prefer other combinations. Apparently, this ambiguity is inherent to other folk titles adopted in political anthropology as well. At least that is one of the messages that can be read in Hagesteijn's and Van der Vliet's analyses of the label 'king' (below).

Systems of leadership somewhat similar to, or nearly identical with, the Melanesian 'Big-Man' have been encountered throughout the rest of the world. In network analyses (Barth (ed.) 1963; Boissevain 1974; see also Strating & Uhlenbeck in this volume) frequent comparisons with the 'Big-Man' concept are made. The Latin-American *cacique* (cf Friedrich 1968; Clastres 1980; Buve in this volume) is another example. Similarities or parallels with economic entrepreneurs and business tycoons — especially with regard to personal achievement and innovative behaviour — are remarked upon. Consequently some researchers are tempted to incorporate the shoeshine boy — newspaper magnate myth within political anthropology (cf also Baker, below).

So, people with (some or several) 'Big-Man' attributes are to be found all over the world in most societies. But it is important to note that people with these characteristics both outside and within the Melanesian realm cannot always be easily incorporated in the formal structure of their society (cf Baker, Buve below), as they exist more or less apart from formal political offices or in the margin of more comprehensive political systems. As Strating & Uhlenbeck (below) visualize politics, in some cases 'Big-Men' may belong to the latent/rival political structure; in other cases of course, they may be integrated in the regular political institutions.

As has already been indicated above, a Melanesian 'Big-Man' may be described as a person who by means of his personal skills and abilities achieves a position of renown and power. As Melanesian society often lacks a formally fixed political and governmental system, 'Big-Men' are the most conspicuous political figures there. Their most important characteristics seem to be a skill in manipulating persons and resources to their own ends. Inherent to such an achieved position is its instability, as it is always threatened both from the inside as well as from the outside. From the outside competing 'Big-Men' may strive for the same position. From the inside the 'Big-Man' is dependent on the consent of his followers (cf Louwe, below) and upon his possibilities to extract and to distribute resources (cf Lindstrom 1984). In more formalized political systems (including some Melanesian examples such as the Trobriand

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Islands) there is normally no office of 'Big-Man', no place for such a character in the organization. So his offices may not be wanted by officialdom, which results in instability (cf Buve, Baker, below).

Outside Melanesia people (or rather, functions) with quite similar characteristics are named by a great variety of labels, which cover similar but not identical contents; different situations lead to different solutions (cf Kloos, this volume). Some of these terms are:
— *entrepreneur*, or political entrepreneur; most of the time this title is used in economic contexts, and the (wo-)man who holds it is usually not considered a part of the political system, at least not by the people in that society. Only with the adjective 'political' it comes anywhere near the concept of 'Big-Man' (cf Kloos, Schrijvers, Trouwborst, below). Being gender neutral and without marked Melanesian connotations, 'political entrepreneur' has much to recommend its use in political anthropology.
— *patron*; this term denotes a focal point in power relations, which are not overtly political in character, often carrying rights and obligations in the personal sphere. The relationships are hierarchical and manystranded between individual persons or institutions such as bureaucracies or states with strong reciprocal overtones. A set of such relations often constitutes a more or less fixed system ('patronage') which may incorporate a large part of a society when not of the universe or the world system. Individual patrons are themselves clients of patrons higher up, who may ultimately reside in Heaven, beyond the Pope, the King or the President of the Union.
— *cacique*; in Spain a cacique shows within his 'little fatherland' many of the characteristics of a 'Big-Man'. Simultaneously he is part of a wider political system, which for some period of time depends on him, but which originally provided the legitimation, upon which he is dependent. From the outside he is just a middleman or a broker; from the inside of his local domain he is a 'Big-Man'. Latin American *caciques*, although well-known from the writings of García-Marquez are different in a number of aspects; according to Buve (below), the differences, though real, are very difficult to assemble in a good definition.
— *informal leader*; this seems to be a twin notion. On the one hand the term is used for leadership outside the political realm (as for instance for the community roles played by the wealthiest gem merchants in Sri Lanka, Baker, below), on the other it denotes leadership in societies without a formal political sphere (as exemplified by Oosten's description of leadership among the Inuit, below). What unites these issues is the emphasis on the personal qualities of the informal leader serving to back up a position of which it is thought that it is not very different from the ordinary.

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All these concepts share a concern with the personal, the un-official, the incidental, which does not preclude the structural presence of 'Big-Man'-like roles in a society, of course: it is the assumption of such roles which is governed by personal strivings and private politics. As such they form a subject of political leadership in general, often counterposed to chiefly and eldermen roles. 'Chief' was originally an indiscriminately used title to indicate any native leadership (when this was accompanied by some impressive pomp and circumstance, 'king' was used instead). After the fission of the 'Big-Man' concept chief came to denote a leading position with an ascribed (primarily inherited) character, in contrast with the 'Big-Man' with an achieved status. A chief's position is based on his/her position in a kin system, by definition hereditary. Elder, or elderman, points to age as a distinctive trait, as well as experience and a derived status (Baker 1983, Allen 1984). Personal abilities and thrivings are usually not considered a prerequisite for eldermen.

So, all these terms and concepts show some deviances from the 'Big-Man'. In the concept of entrepreneur emphasis is put on personal abilities and actions. A chief holds a position of renown and power. A patron exerts power too, but on a local level mostly; as does the *cacique*, whose supra local connections may prove to be not as secure as their appearances. The political and the informal leader as well as the eldermen all hold positions of authority, of power, but each with a power base different from that of the 'Big-Man'. The 'Big-Man' is (or can be) a specific entrepreneur or political leader and may exhibit aspects of a chief, a patron or an elder. As part of the dominant political system the 'Big-Man' is a typical Melanesian phenomenon. However, aspects of 'Big-Manship' seem to be universal.

To complete the historical survey it can be observed that the term 'Big-Man' is now being borrowed from anthropology and incorporated into other disciplines. See for instance in this volume the contributions of the historians Van der Vliet for pre-classical Greece and Teunis for medieval France; the prehistorians Bloemers for the Iron Age, Van de Velde for the Neolithic Period, and Van der Leeuw for Neolithisation or sedentarisation. Perhaps assisted by this ''trespassing of disciplinary boundaries'' a turning away from a concern with classificatory and typological frameworks can be noted. But also in political anthropology itself changes can be observed: a definite trend towards a more structural systemic, even dynamic approach is the expression of this (Allen 1984, Friedman 1981). Most articles in the present volume bear witness to this development. It is to be doubted whether in such approaches there is much use for rigidly defined concepts — in the present case, that of the 'Big-Man'.

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An Itinerary in 'Big-Man' Land

To rephrase the issue: anthropologists apply a wide variety of labels and concepts to the subject of political leadership, one type of which is 'Big-Manship'. What are the limits of the use of the 'Big-Man' concept? For example, Kloos (in this volume) noting the differences elsewhere, proposes to restrict its usage to Melanesia and to label other types of achieved political leaders 'entrepreneur'; Schrijvers, dwelling at length on the viricentrism of the term and content, comes to an identical proposition.

Of course, the issue is (at least to a large extent) related to the methodological proclivities of the researcher: whether he is attracted to an instrumentalist or to an essentialist position (Popper 1969: 97-103). In this volume, Van de Velde and Van der Leeuw are inclined to use the term 'Big-Man' as a throwaway label, and therefore can be grouped as instrumentalists regarding this issue. Other contributors such as Kloos, Schrijvers and even more so Oosten and Trouwborst, are more inclined to take the opposite point of view. For them the term 'Big-Man' and the concept it represents go together. Hence their insistence upon the limited applicability of the term. They suggest the use of different names to refer to similar types of leadership in different cultural contexts.

Obviously, there is a fundamental problem here and all the articles grouped in the theoretical part deal with it. Some of the contributors want to restrict the use of the term 'Big-Man' either to the Melanesian world (Kloos) or to those societies that revere personal achievement (Oosten); or, and this is a methodological localism, to viricentric analyses of the power domain (Schrijvers). Strating & Uhlenbeck provide yet a different restricted view from an action oriented stand. They associate the ethnographic difficulties of the 'Big-Man' concept with the non-institutionalized political forms that belong to incipient political institutions which are rival to the existing organization. The scope of this latter model is also clearly a local one as it presupposes the existence of political organization(s) of a non-'Big-Man' nature; the article by Doornbos on post-colonial 'Big-Men' in Africa is an illustrative case-study of such situations.

Other contributors observe that the personal and informal aspects of the concept can be matched in almost any political system, no matter its complexity (Trouwborst, Van Bakel). Yet they arrive at diametrically opposed conclusions, to the effect that Trouwborst would like to abandon the label 'Big-Man' when analysing non-Melanesian cases (which brings him into line with Kloos c.s.) while Van Bakel would retain the term as a universally applicable category which emphasizes the per-

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sonalistic qualities associated with the concept (cf also Hagesteijn). A radical stand is taken by Van der Vliet and Van de Velde; they want to relate first and foremost to the whole political field in society, which may materialize in quite different role-sets and institutions, some of which would equate with the received notion of 'Big-Man' in some societies, but in most societies these would show a combination of aspects of other types as well (incidentally, this latter position might provide a way out of the difficulties with the term 'Big-Man' as encountered by Oosten and Schrijvers).

The article by Bloemers may be seen as a mirror for anthropologists; deliberately extensive about his data base (and such is the tradition in his discipline) he makes it clear that a lot is NOT known. Only the merest indicators have survived 25 centuries of burial, and a jump to hasty conclusions or easy labels is clearly unwarranted. The message we read in this remarkable essay is: how sure is political anthropology or evolutionary anthropology about its empirical references, how reliable are the sources — and considering what we have written in the last few paragraphs the answer must be a humble 'not so very much'. We do not think this uncertainty related to the accidental absence of Melanesian material in this book, but rather to the state of the art: theory-building is not anthropology's stronghold. Still, as Lévi-Strauss long ago remarked: ''it is not comparison that supports generalization, but the other way round'' (1967: 21); that is, theory should precede analysis and observation. The essays in the theoretical part should further the theory, the case-studies that follow should feed the discussion providing data for further 'comparison' and testing.

The methodological aspect does not exhaust the contents of the theoretical part of this volume. The articles there may profitably be read with other questions in mind as well. Thus the evolutionist's rendering of it would proceed along different lines albeit that some of the articles are not concerned with this domain. Van der Leeuw's essay brings information theory to bear on the differentiation of political roles attendant upon societal development — leadership structures being a first answer to the problem of harnessing increasing information loads. Schrijvers' article can be seen as about the crystallization of political roles within a disjunct normative structure: the *emic* (or culture specific recognition of a) role set is universally biased because of the male-female opposition and its organizational strictures (which are accepted in science, even). In other words, an account of the political evolution should carefully take notice of the common, universal machismo of probably all (and including 'Big-Man') empirical power structures.

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When Kloos notes that 'Big-Men'/political entrepreneurs are not confined to a relatively simple level of political complexity but are rather omnipresent (and the case studies in the second part of this book effectively prove the point) this virtually eliminates 'Big-Men' as a distinctive criterion for describing the evolution of society. The argument may be linked to that by the 'radikalinskis' Van der Vliet and Van de Velde, when they designate the political domain *as-a-whole* as the analytical unit, within which a specific notion of power, or power functions should be separated out, rather than the other way around: nearly all the articles in this book demonstrate that it is not so much egalitarian societies which are the background of 'Big-Men', but open competition and/or egalitarian networks (which by their action are then temporarily transformed to apical structures). If these ideas prove viable, they would require rethinking of several of the central tenets of political anthropology, for example the presumed association of distinct leadership types with different levels of evolution. Even though neither of the two refers to Morton Fried (e.g. 1967), he might be nodding approvingly.

There is always an amount of arbitrariness in the grouping of articles in a book such as this one. Excepting the articles by Van der Leeuw and by Strating & Uhlenbeck, the heading 'theoretical considerations' over the first subset does not prejudice their ethnographic or case-study-like contents. Similarly, those appointed 'case-studies' are fully unconceivable without theoretical backings — not only as an invocation of the editors' scientific convictions, but also as a descriptive feature of the contents of the articles.

For post-colonial Uganda, Doornbos discusses the role local leaders ('Big-Men', chiefs) may have to play when the central government extends its reach to the more remote areas of the country. The first part of Buve's article, dealing with the development of *caciquismo* in rural Spain provides an example of the same phenomenon. And as much as ''Don Jaime'' on the Spanish Plateau is a case of 'Big-Manism' outside Melanesia, so is the 12th-century Geoffrey Plantagenet as he emerges from Teunis' concise analysis of the politics of the Anjou dynasty in those distant days. Here (Anjou) as there (Spain; and Uganda possibly too) the rise of the bureaucratic apparatus associated with the establishment of the state, spells the end of these political entrepreneurships. Within such bureaucracies occasionally 'Big-Men' may pop up too: Claude Whatey seems to be a Caribbean example with all kinds of reminiscences of pre-formalized structures, as shown by Tjon Sie Fat. Also Malta's Dom Mintoff, once the undisputed leader of the Labor Party on his Island, while staying well within the bounds of a

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parliamentary democracy, certainly had many attributes that would have made him a 'Big-Man', had he been born on a Melanesian instead of a Mediterranian Island — Boissevain does not leave room for doubt about that. Less political (but what is politics?) 'Big-Man'-like leaders are described by Louwe and by Baker. Louwe discusses the career of a Cosa Nostra 'boss'; the only thing that does not fail him in the end is his ambition. Yet his followers, and his position dwindle away as soon as his political acumen diminishes. Baker, continuing her earlier interests in 'Big-Man' research (Baker 1983), exposes the gemming-culture of Southern Sri Lanka to the light of political anthropology; again, personal adroitness, and luck are determinant for those who succeed in reaching the 'Big-Man' status. But again their position is just as vulnerable as that of Mafia leaders or Melanesian bigfella men.

Concluding Remarks

As heuristic device, the ideal-type of a 'Big-Man' may have its utility, but that is a far cry from the reification lurking implicitly and inadvertently behind the question of the 'applicability' of the concept. While concepts may more or less correspond to empirical phenomena, types are mental constructs, at best 'good to think in'. But, when it can be maintained (as some of the contributors do) that leadership or management of societal affairs has achieved ('Big-Manly') *as well as* ascribed ('chiefly') features in almost all significant contexts, then the questions should be aimed at elucidating the reasons behind the differential combinations and mixes of such features as they occur in actual societies. As we see it, political anthropology is about political organization rather than about 'societal types'.

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PART ONE

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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JOKE SCHRIJVERS

MAKE YOUR SON A KING: POLITICAL POWER THROUGH MATRONAGE AND MOTHERHOOD

"I was hungry and went to my son's house
The son and his wife were measuring for storing up their rice
Then they measured a tiny bit and gave me
My dear son, did I measure the milk also when I fed you?"
(Sinhalese folk poem[1])

Introduction

During the last centuries before the Christian era, an 'early state' (Claessen and Skalník 1978) was formed in Sri Lanka. Glancing through the first chronicles and some recent historical descriptions of the emergence of a unified polity in Sri Lanka, I was struck by two types of bias in the interpretations of events.

Firstly, *ethnocentric* values erroneously suggest the dominance and unity of the Buddhist Sinhala race when in actual fact, more than 2000 years ago, both Tamil and Sinhala rulers controlled many different settlements in various parts of the island. The political aspects of this bias were discussed by a number of scholars (see Paranavitana (ed.) 1959; Gunawardana 1982; Ponnambalam 1983). In this article I shall not go into this subject, although it is highly important.

Secondly, *viricentric* ideology hides or devalues the political power of women during this period, thereby erroneously creating the image of absolute dominance of the male sex. This image is reinforced by the use of viricentric concepts such as 'Big-Man', 'chief', or 'patronage'. The implications of this second bias for the historiography or political anthropology of this epoch have, to my knowledge, not been analysed so far.

In this article I shall try to look at this period from the point of view of elite women, who were strengthening their political position. Were their strategies similar to those of their big brothers, fathers and sons, or do we see significant differences due to the prevailing gender ideology?[2] If it were possible to answer this question, some conceptual difficulties might become clearer as well: does a non-viricentric, or anti-sexist, approach require that established concepts, like the 'Big-Man', are simply supplemented by their uxoricentric counterparts, like the 'Big-Woman'? Or

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do we have to conclude, that integration of the political activities of women requires a redefinition of the established theory itself?

Within the scope of this article I can only touch upon these matters, hoping to give rise to more serious research. First, I shall indicate the possibilities and limitations of female political power during the formation of the early Sri Lankan state. Second, as a concrete example, I shall describe the political strategies of some of the most famous ladies in Sri Lanka's history. The last paragraph will contain some theoretical notes.

Political Entrepreneurs

Up to about the middle of the second century B.C., the island of Sri Lanka was divided into a number of small political units. In the earliest chronicles, the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*, the leaders of these units are referred to as *raja*, which has been translated as 'king'. According to the Sri Lankan historian Gunawardana, however, it is not correct to describe these polities as kingdoms, as they were at a very elementary level of organizational development: a governmental apparatus or a differentiation of political functions had not yet evolved. Although he uses the term chiefdom instead of kingdom, "... certain traits more akin to a 'Big-Man' system could also be detected in these polities" (Gunawardana 1981: 137).

Although the phrase '*Big-Man*' came from Melanesian societies, according to Sahlins

> "... the indicative quality of big-man authority is everywhere the same: it is *personal* power. Big-men do not come to office; they do not succeed to, nor are they installed in, existing positions of leadership over political groups. The attainment of big-man status is rather the outcome of a series of acts which elevate a person above the common herd and attract about him a coterie of loyal, lesser men. It is not accurate to speak of 'Big-Man' as a political title, for it is but an acknowledged standing in inter-personal relations — a "prince among men" so to speak as opposed to the "prince of Danes"." (Sahlins 1963: 289)

The struggle for personal power, competition for status, and establishment of relations of loyalty: these elements are indeed characteristic of political leadership in Sri Lanka some 2000 years ago. Competition for sociopolitical status took place by means of warfare, and by donations to the Buddhist clerical community, mostly of cave dwellings. Taking part in this 'conspicious generosity' was essential in order to achieve political power.

> "People of diverse social position took part in this competition but the *parumaka* were clearly at an advantage, for they appear to have possessed

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> the resources to make donations on an impressive scale. Twenty-eight percent of all recorded donations were made by this group. A likely interpretation of the term *parumaka* would be that it denoted heads of clan groups.'' (Gunawardana 1981: 136)

The person who could achieve the highest sociopolitical status, by combining conspicuous generosity with the building of strong networks of loyalty, acted as the political and military leader of a group. The security of the population was ensured in exchange for *bali*: voluntary offerings, 'oblations', with strong religious connotations.

> ''Later on these oblations may have become more regular and obligatory, but it is important that they represent a personal relationship between the ruler and the ruled.'' (Gunawardana 1981: 138)

The power relations between the many political units were highly dynamic, the main factors of coordination being warfare and affinal exchange. The long struggle for power among the political units finally culminated in the impressive military campaigns of *Dutthagamani* (161-137 B.C.). This 'Big-Man' was the first to claim universal sovereignty in the island. From then onwards the 'early state' was a fact, enabling the economically dominant groups to exercise power in their interests.

Matronage and Motherhood

From the above description one might get the impression, that every person gifted with strategic capacities could become a leader. Ascribed status, however, like family background and sex, limited a person's opportunities. Given the same talents, the person having the best starting position would achieve most (Claessen 1974: 101). Family wealth in the form of ownership of irrigationworks, animals, and, later on, land, was an important starting point. Likewise, a man had wider opportunities than a woman to make use of family wealth and political talents for building up a political career. The two main factors operating in favour of male political entrepreneurs were (1) the norm, that the head of a household, clan, lineage or chiefdom should be a male, and (2) the norm, that military activities, i.e. the use of physical violence as a means of power, were restricted to males. These two norms form part of a much wider ideology regarding the nature and behaviour of men and women, in short, of the gender ideology. According to this ideology, from the early days onward in Sri Lanka women's work and interests have been associated primarily with the role of motherhood, to be acted out in and around the house. Risseeuw, describing the traditional ideas on the sexes in Sri Lanka, writes:

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> "She (the woman) is taught to conceive her motherhood as the highest state of self-realization. The role of mother is greatly loved and praised and the pedestal on which a beautiful, virtuous, fertile wife stands is very high. Simultaneously, however, the ideal of motherhood points silently to the assumption that men are most suited to pursue the positions yielding power in society as rulers, government administrators, etc." (Risseeuw 1980: 133)

In her portrait of women, as they appear in the Books of *Mahavamsa* and *Culavamsa*, the earliest chronicles, and the *Jataka* stories about the former lives of the Lord Buddha, Risseeuw analyses the norms for female behaviour, by selecting two extremes of portrayed womanhood:

> "On the one hand one has the virtuous, pure and self-effacing mother and wife, who usually remains uninvolved and unwary of the outer world, unless special circumstances induce her to play an important role. On the other hand one has women equally endowed with feminine qualities as beauty, emotion and intuition, but who also because of these qualities become fickle, unreliable and even vicious. Refusing leadership of others (men, elders, priests, etc), they can in the end cause destruction of themselves, people surrounding them or even the larger group/community to which they belong." (Risseeuw 1980: 135)

'Good' women are allowed to be talented in many aspects, but they have to use these talents primarily for the well-being of their families, under the guidance of men. The cultural norm for women is to overcome their 'natural' wiles and ficklenesses, by learning to be self-effacing, gentle and obedient. What is culturally considered a skill in a man, such as assertiveness and leadership, is considered a wile in a woman. Consequently, the most obvious qualities for efficient political entrepreneurship, i.e. formal leadership and the use of violence such as military activities, do not tally with the traditional female gender conception.

This is not to say that women never took positions of formal leadership, dealing closely with military affairs. The case of the royal *Sugala*, queen-mother at the court of *Rohana*, shows how a talented, ambitious widow in the 12th century led military resistance all by herself. The description of her character in the *Culavamsa*, the chronicle describing this period, leaves no doubt, however, as to the negative influence her behaviour had on her later reputation:

> "The Queen Sugala who had not a mind capable of reflection and was inclined herself by nature to evil, let the fatal words of those people (her supporters in Rohana) influence her. She made over to them the great possessions of pearls, jewels and the like over which she had control, as well as the rich treasures belonging to the Tooth and Alms-bowl Relics as if she were throwing them into the fire, gave them office, ignorant of the right and the wrong occasion, and began herself through them to start the revolt." (Geiger 1953b: 24)

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Sugala is depicted as a foolish, evil woman, who does not know 'the right and the wrong'. In actual fact, she was able to lead the campaigns of her armies for ten years, keeping the two most sacred treasures, the Sacred Bowl and Tooth relics, as holy legitimation of their struggle. In the description of the long, bloody war, *Sugala*'s name is not further mentioned by the author of the chronicle (a Buddhist monk). Only at the end of the struggle, when the resistance is finally broken, she cannot be left out any longer. The supporters of the winning party conclude from their victories:

> ''Why then should we henceforth think to carry on war with the foe hidden here and there through fear? Queen Sugala is the cause of these people becoming rebels and has led them into the wilderness. Therefore we must get the queen alive into our power.
> (..) when at the place called Vanagama they caught sight of the hostile army with whom was the Queen, they fought there a great (and) fearful battle. With the sound of their drums of victory cleaving open, as it were, the earth, they seized the Queen and all her treasures of many a kind.'' (Geiger 1953b: 60-61)

The chronicle does not mention what happened to *Sugala* after her defeat. According to Seneviratne, who beautifully tried to reconstruct history as seen from the perspective of the famous women of the *Mahavamsa* and *Culavamsa*,

> ''Parakrama Bahu (i.e. the victor, J.S.) who admired courage and recognized greatness in others would have received her with fitting ceremony. After all, he who had treated his defeated cousins, Gajabahu and Manabharana, with forbearance and compassion, would surely have done the same to his royal, rebel aunt.'' (Seneviratne 1969: 153)

Formal leadership and military activities were not expected of women. However, other aspects of political entrepreneurship, as described by Gunawardana, do not contradict accepted female behaviour: conspicuous generosity to increase status, and creating loyal support by patron-client relationships were open for women as well as for men. All available sources indicate, that those women who had good starting positions, for instance because of family wealth, maximized these strategic means for achieving power. As long as they behaved in a culturally accepted feminine way, their good reputation was not lost.

Bilateral inheritance rules entitled women to control important means of production, like animal wealth and shares of irrigable paddy land. This enabled them to take active part in conspicuous generosity, by making donations, such as cave dwellings, to the Buddhist clerics. Like men they could gain social prestige, proof of which lays in the inscriptions found in the rocks in which cave dwellings were constructed. Using

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an important publication by Paranavitana about these inscriptions, Gunawardana explicitly mentions 13 ladies whose donations have been recorded. The actual number of female donators will have been much higher than mentioned in the article of Gunawardana, for he refers to inscriptions only in as far as they indicate the presence of political ruling units. He writes, for instance:

> "Piduragala is a rocky hill, situated close to the well-known ruins at Sigiriya (..) There are two early Brahmi inscriptions at the site. One of them records the donation of a cave made by two ladies, Tiśadevi and Madana. Tiśadevi is described as a daughter of Aya Majhima and granddaughter of Śiva of Kolagama." (Gunawardana 1982: 14)

A site in the Moneragala district records the donation of a cave-dwelling by a lady named Śona, bearing the title *Parumaka* (Gunawardana 1982: 22). As mentioned above, a remarkably large number of *parumaka*'s, who probably were clan leaders, gained prestige through these donations. According to Gunawardana, these donations are to be seen as examples of *patronage*, extended to the communities of clerics (Guwardana 1982: 16). Women were therefore dispensers of patronage as well as men. In the last paragraphs, I will discuss the possibility, and difficulty, of using the concept of *matronage* when a woman is the central person.

Because of the prevailing gender ideology, and also because Śona's husband had the title *parumaka* as well (Guwardana 1982), it is highly unlikely that Śona, or any other female *parumaka*, acted as a formally recognized political entrepreneur. In male-female relationships, the formal authority was, and is, with the man — father, husband, brother, or son — depending on a woman's marital status. Thus, even if a woman was successful in building a large network of loyal support, in addition to her conspicuous generosity, cultural rules did not allow her to act as head of the household or descent group. And the use of military power to defend or enlarge her own political unit, as we have seen, was even more unacceptable for a respectful lady.

In order to maximize her power and to serve her political interests, therefore, a woman had to seek the loyal support of a man and use him in his position as a formal political leader. If she combined this strategy with conspicuous generosity, a large network of support, and clever manoeuvring of affinal exchange, a woman of a wealthy family in ancient Sri Lanka could actually exert an enormous political power. The strength of this power was mainly in its *hidden* quality, in the capacity subtly to influence the men closest to her.

The hidden character of women's political entrepreneurship was at the same time a source of strength and of vulnerability. Strength, because of the invisibility and unpredictability of female manoeuvring: the assumed

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unreliability of Sinhalese female 'nature' with her 64 wiles could be interpreted as a cultural reflection of men's fear for a means of very real power used by women. The vulnerability of women, who, because of their dependent position, had to use indirect, informal political strategies springs from the asymmetrical relationships between men and women: one 'wrong' step by a woman, and the man who had a formal say over her had the right directly to eliminate her influence by sending her off, using violence, or restricting her in a different way.

The fact, that women in Sinhalese, as in many other societies, do use hidden, manipulative strategies to achieve certain ends, does of course not reflect any 'natural' inclination. This fact is only indicative of their lack of formal power in society. In general, women share this position with many powerless men who tend to use similar, indirect strategies in order to maximize their restricted opportunities (see also Schrijvers 1985).

Mothers and Sons

Sri Lanka's chronicles contain a wealth of information on the influence of women on their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons. The mother-son relationship appears however as by far the strongest. Not only do mothers have a natural power over their sons when they are still small, they tend to capitalize on their mutual love, trying to keep them emotionally dependent even as grown-up men (cf Schrijvers 1985). The love and loyalty of sons are essential for women, as long as they are dependent on men for their maintenance and social status. Eventually, a son's support may be more important than a husband's, especially in the case of a royal woman, who in ancient Sri Lanka faced a high risk of loosing her militant husband long before her own life ended.

I have mentioned the case of *Sugala*, who herself led the resistance in *Rohana* after both her husband and her son had died. It had been her aspiration to make her son king of *Pollonnaruwa*, the capital in which her grandfather *Vijayabahu I* had founded the then ruling dynasty. After the death of *Vijayabahu I*, a civil war broke out during which the land was torn between rival factions claiming sovereignty. The chronicles emphasize the power struggle between two cousins, *Parakkamabahu* and *Manabharana*, won by the first. *Manabharana* was the son of *Sugala*.
There is no emphasis in the chronicle on the fact, that the two fighting cousins from the day of their birth had been fed and influenced by their mothers, who both wanted their sons to rule the country. *Parakkamabahu*'s mother, *Ratanavali*, was *Vijayabahu*'s own daughter, whereas *Sugala*, *Manabharana*'s mother, was his grand-daughter. The

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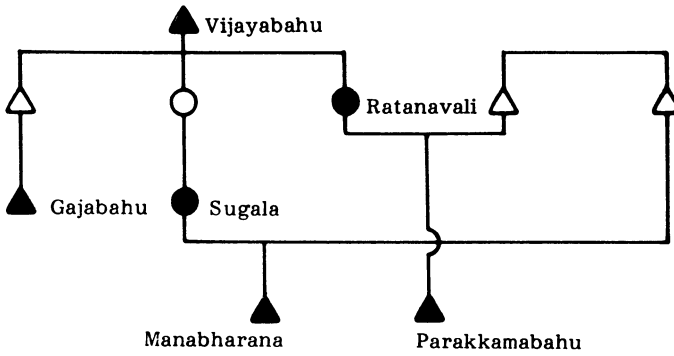

Fig. 1. Queen Sugala and her royal contemporaries.

women had married two brothers. After *Ratanavali* had become a widow at a young age, she was put under the guardianship of her deceased husband's brother, who was *Sugala*'s husband. From then onwards the two women had to live in the same court. Seneviratne writes:

> "But the feeling of accord between the two women was short-lived. There was too much at stake. Both were mothers of only sons whom they passionately loved. (..) Sugala became aware of the salient schemes being insidiously laid by the wily Ratanavali and her enterprising son, and the sanguine hopes for their future. She made up her mind to oppose them with all her power. In turn she prepared her own son, Manabharana, to meet the threats ahead of him. She goaded him to be his cousin's life-long, implacable foe." (Seneviratne 1969: 141)

Sugala and her son, however, were not as strong as the other mother-and-son couple. After his father's death, *Manabharana* carried on the war against his cousin *Parakkamabahu*, but was defeated and had to flee in fear from *Pollonnaruwa*. Seneviratne describes how he hastened back to his mother, stumbling and falling amid the undergrowth of the forest. "Racked by fear, he had left his own children in the lurch" (Seneviratne 1969: 143). They were taken as hostages, and "broken and defeated *Manabharana* reached the palace of Ruhuna where his mother awaited him" (Seneviratne 1969). Shortly afterwards, he died of an incurable disease.

Less tragic, in contrast, is the story of *Ratanavali* and her son *Parakkamabahu*. After the birth of her two daughters, she had longed passionately for the birth of this son, whom she wanted, like her father, to unite Lanka under one umbrella once more. Her son was born, but when he was still a child her husband died, and she had to move with her children to her brother-in-law's place in *Rohana*.

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> "Her love for her son was the strongest emotion of her nature, but she did not seek to keep him at her side. Instead this love for him impelled her to do her utmost to help him achieve their mutual ambitions. She knew the task that lay before him was far from simple; that there was a great deal to prepare for; much to be accomplished before the kingdom they so ardently desired to possess for themselves became theirs." (Seneviratne 1969: 130-131)

She sent *Parakkamabahu* to his uncle's court at *Dakkinadesa*, the traditional seat of the heir to the throne, where he received the necessary education and training. He then shifted to *Pollonnaruwa*, moved closely among the people and established an excellent espionage system through which he learned the secrets of his cousin's court. When *Gajabahu*, his cousin, became suspicious, a guile was planned by mother and son.

> "Believing that if the King (Gajabahu) were made unsuspicious, he (Parakkamabahu) could then move about as he would, and easily learn the actual conditions in the interior of the country, he sent a letter to his mother who was dwelling in Rohana, fetched thence his younger sister, the charming princess Bhaddavati, as well as abundant money, under the pretext that it was her property. The money he took to himself but the Princess he wedded to the Lord of men Gajabahu and so managed matters that the Ruler completely trusted him ..." (Geiger 1953a: 265)

According to Seneviratne, there must have been a

> "perfect rapport of understanding between mother and son, for so much to have been accomplished by means of a letter. Very probably their messengers were also very active on their behalf and completely dedicated to their cause." (Seneviratne 1969: 132-133)

In spite of this strategic alliance, after some time *Parakkamabahu* could no longer stay in his cousin's kingdom. But he also did not dare to go back to his uncle in *Dakkinadesa.* For, although this uncle had brought him up, *Parakkamabahu* had not asked him for permission to leave, and he was moreover suspected by him of having caused the death of one of his trusted supporters. He lingered therefore on the border between the two kingdoms, obviously not knowing what to do.

> "When Queen Ratanavali heard that her son was there, but that he was not coming (..), she thought: "It is not mere that grief should be caused to the King by my son passing the time without coming; I will myself at once bring my son to the Monarch and present him, to him." Thereupon she came in haste from Rohana hither, (..) sought out the Ruler, exchanged with him many friendly words and (..) informed him about the reason for her coming. Then she went to Saraggama, sought out her son, the Thera, the chief of the ascetics, and the head of the Sabha and took close counsel with them as to what was to be done. And as (in her opinion) it was not at all seemly to linger far (from the capital), she took the Prince along with her ..." (Geiger 1953a: 273)

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The king welcomed his cousin and declared him his rightful heir. Shortly after, the king passed away. *Ratanavali* from then on remained most of the time with her son, playing a key role in the many plots and intrigues which were as necessary as the force of arms for him finally to become king of *Pollonnaruwa.*

> "Ratanavali's son was undaunted by the obstacles in his path (..) And his mother stood by and inwardly applauded her strong-willed, insatiable son." (Seneviratne 1969: 134-135)

It is obvious, that *Ratanavali* influenced her son at decisive moments, never openly taking the lead, however. Using her power as a mother in a furtive way, her reputation was saved: the *Culavamsa* describes her as a 'good' mother.

As a last example of a strong mother-and-son couple I would like to return to the historical period of Sri Lanka's early state, which formed the starting point of this article. Some thirteen centuries before *Ratanavali* made her son a king, there was another mother who succeeded in doing the same. She, too, has been described in the chronicle as a 'good' mother, and she has gone into history as the most famous example of the pious, virtuous, beautiful, self-controlled and perfect woman: *Vihara Maha Devi*, mother of the famous king *Dutthagamani*, who killed the Tamil king *Elara* and took government rule in *Anuradhapura.*

Vihara Maha Devi was living happily with her husband, *Kavan Tissa*, having only one great sorrow: they had been childless for many years already. She then begged a priest, who was seriously ill, to be reborn through her, and he agreed. Soon after his death she realized that she was pregnant. Knowing the later course of history, her pregnancy cravings are most interesting:

> "And there came on the virtuous queen these longings of a woman with child. (This) did she crave: that (..) she longed to drink (the water) that had served to cleanse the sword with which the head of the first warrior among king Elara's warriors had been struck off, (and she longed to drink it) standing on this very head, and moreover (she longed) to adorn herself with garlands of unfaded lotus-blossoms brought from the lotus-marshes of Anuradhapura." (Geiger 1964: 149)

In due time, her son *Gamani* was born, and he was given an elephant named *Kandula.* Several years later a second son, *Tissa*, was born.

Vihara Maha Devi's husband had no aspirations to conquer the Tamil king of the North; he believed he was not yet strong enough. When the sons were twelve and ten years of age, their father, worried about their strong patriotic feelings, had an almsgiving and wanted them, among

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other things, to promise that they would never fight the Tamils. Hereupon *Gamani* became furious and refused: he went to his bed and lay upon it clenching his hands and feet, curled up like a ball. His mother came, and, caressing him, asked him why he did not lie down upon his bed easily with limbs outstretched. *Gamani* answered: "How can I sleep straight when the Tamils are at my head and the sea is at my feet?". Some years later, he announced to his father that he would make war with the Tamils. When the king forbade him to do so, *Gamani* sent his father a female garment, saying that was all he was fit to wear. To escape his father's rage, he then fled to the jungle, helped by his mother. Because of this disrespectful attitude to his father, he was called '*duttha*'-*gamani*, i.e. 'wicked'-*Gamani*.

For 12 years *Dutthagamani* stayed away, until his father died. Before he had been able to return, his brother *Tissa* performed the funeral rites on his father, after which he took his mother and his brother's war-elephant *Kandula*, and hid them far from the palace. But his mother, *Vihara Maha Devi*, secretly sent message to *Dutthagamani*, who was the legal heir. Both brothers knew that "whoever had the mother and the elephant would succeed to the throne" (Robinson 1968: 131). The brothers met in battle, and *Dutthagamani* won the fight, getting back his mother and his elephant. The *Mahavamsa* says:

> "Hereupon the king went to Mahagama, and thither did he bring his mother, whom he greatly reverenced." (Geiger 1964: 168)

Soon after, *Dutthagamani* set out on his campaign against the Tamils. According to Seneviratne, he was accompanied not only by his chariots and troops, but also by his mother,

> "who rode beside him, sharing all his perils. During the long, difficult months that followed, she gave him unsparingly of her advice and direction, participated in his set-backs and triumphs, his worries and anxieties, helped him resolve the many problems that confronted him day after day." (Seneviratne 1969: 34-35)

The chronicle gives some evidence, that *Vihara Maha Devi*'s motherly advice covered the tactics of war as well. Before the great battle with *Elara*'s army,

> "the king Dutthagamani also took counsel with his mother and by her counsel formed thirty-two bodies of troops. In these the king placed parasol-bearers and figures of a king (i.e. wooden figures, J.S.); the monarch himself took his place in the innermost body of troops." (Geiger 1964: 174)

His mother's advice had been sound; *Dutthagamani* survived the battle as the great victor, and became the supreme king, claiming sovereignty

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over the whole of Lanka as the first king in history. The *Mahavamsa* does not mention his mother's name after this event. According to Seneviratne:

> "Tradition has it that she lived to witness and share in his crowning achievement and celebrate the unique event. Hers was a place of pride and honour beside her beloved son, and she remained his trusted confidante and wise counsellor in the quiet years of peace that followed, as she had been in times of war and stress." (Seneviratne 1969: 36)

Some Theoretical Notes

The image of complete dominance by the male sex is an ideological construct rather than a material fact, in any case in the setting of ancient Sri Lanka. This ideological bias is deepened by viricentric concepts such as the 'Big-Man'. Just like the ethnocentric bias, the ideological emphasis on male power serves a political function. Concepts like the 'Big-Man', when used as an accepted phrase in political anthropology, preclude the possibility of perceiving women as political actors. As we have seen, women, too, (on their own or through men) have acted as political entrepreneurs, and sometimes with great success.

Recognition of this fact does not automatically result in new theories enabling a better understanding of reality. We have to think of new concepts, and more realistic theories, uncovering and relating the sometimes deeply different strategies and perspectives of both sexes. The question arises, whether new, female-oriented concepts — such as 'Big-Woman' — can simply be added to the established body of knowledge, without altering existing 'big-theories'.

This article has shown the political strategies of women increasing their power to be different from those of men who live in the same culture, class and historical period. It is my assumption, that in general significant sexual differences in the strategies and opportunities of achieving political power will remain, as long as there remains one universal division of labour with matching gender ideology, between women and men. Whatever their other responsibilities are, women everywhere have the monopoly of daily feeding, nurturing and nursing babies, infants, grown-up men, the sick and the old. Nowhere, as far as I know, does this female labour, when it is successful, create social prestige by itself. On the other hand, men everywhere have the monopoly of weapons and warfare, whatever their other responsibilities. Military success is highly prestigious in all societies, even in Buddhist Sri Lanka, and leads directly to political power. These differences in the sexual division of labour have vast consequences for the power relations between women and men.

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If this assumption is true, two notes have to be made here. In the first place there is no 'naturalness' to this universal sexual division of labour and gender ideology. Men who mother, and women who kill; fickle males and reliable females, have been known to us from remote historical periods to the present day, in the most diverse types of society. What is accepted as male and female are cultural facts, that can be changed and adapted to new circumstances. In the second place, we should avoid a sexist, black-and-white picture, showing militant, dominating, male producers and gentle, obedient, female reproducers. Men and women both engage in productive activities, and try to reach political goals in the domestic and extra-domestic, the informal and the formal sphere. There are many powerless men and many powerful women. Still, comparing men and women of the same class and socio-economic background, we see that men tend to have more control over physical, socio-economic and ideological means of power than women. The majority of women face more limitations than men of their own background, to see to their interests. But women do exert power, and, whether hidden or obvious, this power can have significant political consequences. Especially with a view to processes of social change, it is therefore essential to understand the methods by which women gain strength and reach political goals, in interaction with other women and with men.

Having acknowledged that women do act as political entrepreneurs, why not simply add the terms 'Big-Woman' as well as 'Matronage' to the conceptual framework of political anthropology?

In her search for examples of female power, Sacks uses the phrase 'Big-Man' for a person who has succeeded in building up support ''in his or her endeavors'', without introducing 'Big-Woman' as the female equivalent (Sacks 1982: 76). Both Strathern and Weiner, who did research on women in Melanesia (resp. in Mount Hagen, New Guinea and on the Trobriand Islands), use the term 'Big-Woman'. From their own evidence it is absolutely clear, however, that a woman temporarily becomes big among her own sex, in a social sense. Her building up of social prestige does not lead to the political power comparable to that of 'Big-Men'. A Trobriand woman can become a ' 'Big-Woman' of the day' in the women's mortuary ceremony, if she has handled her accumulation and distribution of bundles of banana fibres properly (Weiner 1976: 100). In Mount Hagen, being called a 'Big-Woman' is a compliment men are paying women for their prestigious economic value (Strathern 1972: 139). In both cases, women cannot achieve political power like their big husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons. One main reason for this sexual difference is the fact that women cannot marry

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wives to work for them and increase their wealth: they do not have the right to polygamy, nor do they control the labour of their marriage partner. A hard-working, intelligent, respected woman directly contributes to the power of the man who controls her, which may only indirectly benefit her own status as his wife.

Politically powerful 'Big-Women', as equivalents of 'Big-Men', do not seem to exist in Melanesia. I hesitate, therefore, to generalize the term 'Big-Woman' as a fruitful concept for political anthropology. It falsely suggests parallel positions and strategies for women and men. This does not, however, solve the problem of analysing female power.

How about the introduction of the concept of '*Matronage*'? Sacks refers to patronage as the main strategy of political entrepreneurs, whether male or female (Sacks 1982: 77). Maher speaks of 'patron-client' relationships among women in Morocco (Maher 1976). The basis for building a personal following, and thus for patronage, is according to Sacks formed by family wealth in combination with the ability to command the labour and hence wealth produced by wives. Only in a limited number of societies do women have access to the possession of wives, who bring inherited wealth or who produce wealth by hard work. But there are examples, especially from Africa, of such possibilities for women. Among the Nuer, for instance, childless women, belonging to the dominant lineage, could marry a wife of their own and become the social father of their children. By this act, they also become head of their own household. For such women, offering 'patronage' to the non-dominant majority was an important means of gaining political power, just as it was for men. Sacks concludes:

> ''Becoming head of one's own household is a first step to creating and attracting a following of kinspeople and affines.'' (Sacks 1982: 77)

There are other examples of African societies, like the well-known Lovedu, where wealthy women enhanced their political status by marrying many wives. Their career could even end up in the ruling of several villages or districts.

I would suggest to use the term '*Matronage*' for all cases, when women clearly act as the focus of a network of male or female support, being heads of households themselves and controlling resources of political importance. Obviously, such an independent position on the level of the household is an important condition for matrons to get open recognition and a position of political power themselves. In most societies, however, especially among the more affluent people, it is socially not accepted for a woman, whether she is married, unmarried, divorced or widowed, to become head of her own household, let alone to have one or more wives

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herself. But this does not mean, that women in these societies do not control important resources, or are not engaged in relations with clients. Both women and men may establish loyal followings by giving protection and favours in return for support, but these returns always flow back to the head of the household. It is therefore essential for women who don't have such an independent position, to invest as much as they can in the relationships with those men, who have a formal say over them. By helping to strengthen a man's political position, in return for his loyalty and protection, they strengthen their own position. When they are not heads of their own household, women, who control certain resources and act as the focus of a network of clients are thus dependants at the same time, on their own fathers, brothers, husbands or sons. This, according to me, is in most societies the main difference between matrons and patrons. Because of this difference, it is not possible simply to add the concept of Matronage, as a female equivalent to patronage, to the theoretical framework of political anthropology.

Just like the term 'Big-Woman', the term matronage erroneously suggests parallel positions and strategies of male patrons and female matrons, concealing important power differences between the two. In actual fact, as long as a woman is under formal control of a man, e.g. her husband, the relationships she maintains with clients have a more complicated character than patron-client relationships. The following figure may illustrate these differences, and also indicate the difficulties of defining matronage. (In this figure I have provided the male and the female with exclusively male and female networks respectively. This is not a fixed rule, however).

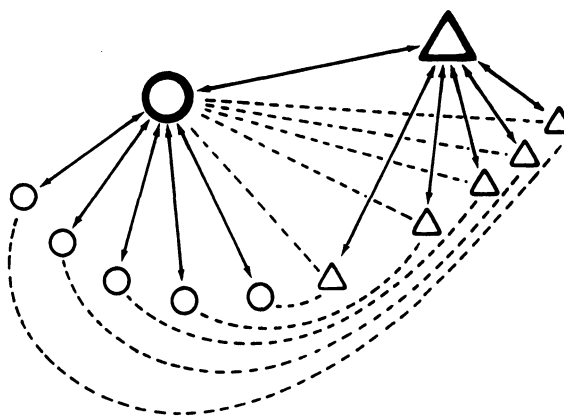

Fig. 2. The difference between a matron's and a patron's network.

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In this figure, the husband-patron has formal authority over his wife. She is supported by her own network of (female) clients, whereas he is the focus of a different (male) network of support. Both control important resources, but she cannot act independently, going openly against his will. Because of his formal control, she has to act more like a "*broker*". For example, in order to influence his decisions, she may exert pressure upon his clients, who in turn may try to influence her in order to put pressure upon their patron. These clients may also approach her clients, to add pressure. In turn, she may push her own clients to influence the patron's clients, in order to pressurize him to act according to her interests. However, the concept of *brokerage* does not sufficiently cover her political activities, as she may at the same time control important resources herself.

The patron's strategies for gaining power involve less manipulative elements than his wife's, because of his formal position of authority as head of the household. Having control over his wife, he does not have to use subtle ways of influencing her; he need not manipulate her or her clients, as he is entitled to use direct, formal power over her. Her position fundamentally changes as soon as his direct control over her comes to an end, for instance at his death. If she can maintain a position as head of the household she will openly be able to use her relations of matronage, in a way comparable to patronage.

This is why I suggested to reserve the term matronage only for such cases, when women are heads of households themselves. If the concept is also used for women who have clients, but who — even on the level of the household — cannot act autonomously (like the woman in the figure above) this would mystify, instead of clarify, the main differences of male and female power. Such a narrow definition of matronage leaves us, however, with the problem of how to phrase the political strategies of the majority of female political entrepreneurs, who have husbands as well as clients. In the concluding section I shall return to this question.

A woman's activities as a political entrepreneur could be of direct interest to the man who has formal authority over her. She could, however, also use her own clients to go against this man, if this serves her purposes better, in order to support another man. Being indispensable to certain men, she can exert power to influence the decisions taken by them. Pushing men of her choice to reach positions of political power, she is serving the political interests of a (kin)group of her own choice.

> During my fieldwork in Sri Lanka, in 1978, in a village in *Anuradhapura* district (the same area where 2000 years ago *Dutthagamani* became king) I got to know two female political entrepreneurs very well. They were married to the men who were most influential in the village: the old village

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> headman and the most successful trader. Both women maintained relations with a number of poor women clients whom they could exploit and finally press to mortgage or sell their land to their husbands, the headman and trader. According to the general opinion in the village, these two men would be nowhere without their wives' hard labour and moral support.

Being dependent on her husband for her social status and for (part of her and her children's) maintenance, a good relationship with him is essential for a woman. With a view to the second half of her life, however, when her husband (who is usually older than she is) may be feeble or dead, it is equally essential for a woman to capitalize on the relationship with her son(s). Moreover, of the men who are closest to her, her sons may be the easiest to influence and tie morally.

In the Sri Lankan context the love and respect of a son for his mother has a high cultural value, even when the son has reached the position of a grown-up man himself. His mother has done everything she can to raise him to become a strong 'Big-Man'. At the same time, she has tried to tie him emotionally to herself, nurturing him as her baby-boy. This 'double message' to her son is not a sign of woman's 'fickle nature'. It is a mother's strategy for sheer survival, or for maximizing her limited power in society. The examples from ancient Sri Lanka show, that mothers may become very successful in influencing their sons, often going against their husbands, thereby strengthening their own political position.

If my interpretation is correct, we may also consider the introduction of the concept of '*Big-Mother*' to the field of political anthropology. This concept, I feel, can be useful for the interpretation of political developments in many societies, not only in Sri Lanka. In the precolonial society of Onitsha, Nigeria, for example, women could achieve a very high political status themselves. For the argument here it is interesting to note, that the highest title '*omu*', often translated as 'queen', literally means 'mother' (Okonjo 1976: 48). In several African kingdoms 'queen-mothers' have played a role, and I am not sure whether they, too, played a role as king-makers.

Conclusion

In this article I have discussed the new concept of *Matronage*, suggesting that it can be useful for a better understanding of political entrepreneurship — especially when it is linked to wifehood and motherhood. More or less jokingly, I have introduced the term '*Big-Mother*' as well, and this could of course be extended to the '*Big-Wife*', without whom the 'Big-Man' would not have become big. At the same time I have tried to explain why viricentric concepts such as 'Big-Man'

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or 'Patronage' cannot simply be complemented by their female equivalents 'Big-Woman' and 'Matronage'. The danger lies in the false suggestion of parallel positions and strategies of male and female political entrepreneurs, whereas the differences are far more important for a correct analysis. For the same reason, it was argued why the in itself sex-neutral concept of *brokerage* does not fully apply to the political activities of the dependent Big-Wife.

I have also argued, why female-focussed concepts cannot without further difficulty be integrated into an existing theory, without altering the theory itself. Within the scope of this article I could only tentatively point out some of the problems to which, according to me, new answers must be sought. One of the main difficulties is our language itself, which does not allow us to use terms that are non-specific with regard to sex. There is for instance no term in between patronage and matronage that can be used for the strategies of patrons and matrons both. Perhaps the solution lies in the strict use of sex-neutral concepts like political entrepreneurship, leaving room for investigation of strategies and transactions of both men and women. This would, however, necessitate the abolishment of established concepts like 'Big-Man' and 'Patronage' — and it would be rather naive to expect all anthropologists to follow this anti-viricentric suggestion without protest.

The criticism of old, and the introduction of new, concepts springs from dissatisfaction with the descriptive and explanatory value of the old ones, and therefore also of the established theories of which the concepts form part. By focussing on women's perspectives and on the interaction between women and men, new concepts will be found, leading to new questions regarding the realistic value and validity of existing theories. In my view, this dialectical process can be both fruitful and constructive. We may be able to explain the deeper socio-political motifs behind men's activities and decisions better. When we focus for instance on the relations between mothers and sons, certain types of political development may become clearer, such as the development of political offices. According to Lienhardt, in many African societies, the beginning of specialization of political roles can be traced back to a strong relationship between mother and son, who act together against the interests of the husband/father:

> "It is well-established in the Nilotic, and more widely, the African, ethnographic literature, that mothers are ambitious and solicitous for their own sons, and that it is women who form the points of cleavage within the household and the lineage (..) where it is possible for a son to turn to his mother's agnates for help against his father's. The competition present in the relations between co-wives is developed in group relations, and there, I

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think, we see the beginning of specialization of political role.'' (Lienhardt 1964: 8)

Have these sons been influenced by their African mothers, just like their counterparts from Sri Lanka, to go against their fathers? And if so, why is it, that mothers in Africa, Asia, or elsewhere, have pushed their sons into certain directions and not into others? What are the political interests of the mothers themselves?

For the further development of anthropological theory with regard to social change it is necessary to include the political activities of women. This is not a matter of simply ''adding'' women to the existing theories, however. We have to critically review the main concepts of political anthropology, which most probably will result in a redefinition of the established theories. We have to link the informal, personal sphere with the formal structure, and the models of evolution with the activities of those who are at the bottom as well as at the top levels of the power hierarchies. Political anthropology may then finally also reflect the stark realities of power as these are experienced from below.

NOTES

1 The idea to use this folk poem is from Kamala Peiris, whom I would like to thank here for her fundamental, constructive criticism of an earlier draft of this article. I also thank Martin van Bakel, Jeremy Boissevain, Peter Kloos, Adam Kuper and Jarich Oosten for their comments.

2 The concept of 'gender' refers to the social and cultural aspects of male and female, as opposed to biological sex.

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SANDER E. VAN DER LEEUW

ON SETTLING DOWN AND BECOMING A 'BIG-MAN'

Panta rhei, ouden menei.
(*Heraclitus*)

Introduction

This chapter intends to apply some ideas which have been developed outside the field of anthropology and archaeology, but in sociology, managerial science, cybernetics, etc. to a stretch of the trajectory of social and cultural evolution, as seen in anthropology and archaeology.

The aim of the article is to consider that evolutionary trajectory from the point of view of information processing and the organisational changes which it entails. The stretch chosen is that between the undifferentiated, mobile small face-to-face group on the one hand, and the somewhat differentiated, settled, lineage society with a 'Big-Man' at its head, on the other.

Looking at this trajectory in detail, one may distinguish what approaches a continuum of forms of social organisation: mobile hunter-gatherer bands, sedentary hunter-gatherer bands, nomadic societies based on the breeding of domesticated animals, semi-settled societies based on transhumance, settled animal breeders, societies based on semi-settled (swidden or slash-and-burn) cultivation, and sedentary societies based on cultivation. In many social, economic and political respects one may expect within this range a considerable variation and combination of elements.

Yet, for the purposes of the present article, highly constrained in size as it is, I will only use three forms of social organization as an illustration of my argument: (1) the small, completely egalitarian (undifferentiated), mobile hunter-gatherer group, (2) the sedentary group which occupies a single village, which subsists on husbandry and cultivation, and in which there is an incipient social differentiation beyond that based on gender (i.e. a 'beginning 'Big-Man' '), and (3) the sedentary group of a somewhat larger size, including several villages, which is organised according to lineages, and which has a 'Big-Man' of somewhat more solid standing at its head, who is the focus of a somewhat more differentiated society.

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Thus, in conceiving this article, I have attempted to avoid thinking in terms of a set of different organisational stages, such as a 'mobile' and a 'settled' state, or in terms of transformations between them. The nature of our language and present-day modes of communication, however, made it impossible to present this train of thought in the continuum (analog) mode. I have had to succumb to the 'digital curse'.

The argument is pinned on three crucial premisses, i.c.:

(1) Heraclitus' idea that change is the natural state of the universe, (and my extension that stability is a human mental construct),

(2) the theory of the self-production of society as propounded by Bourdieu (1979) and Giddens (1979), among others, and notably the idea that "habitus generates behaviour, behaviour generates context, and context generates habitus". In some cases, this may lead to a deviation-amplification, which pushes an existent mode of human perception on and on once it has begun, until it fundamentally clashes, with its changed natural environment.

(3) the assertion that innovations in human behaviour require a change in perception, and that therefore innovations in human behaviour cannot be due solely to the introduction or lifting of constraints in the environment.

The purpose of this contribution is to spark off new ideas, rather than to criticise existing ones. Deliberately, therefore, I have minimized references to the existing archaeological or anthropological literature.

In all this, I am deliberately trying to avoid the impression that I want to explain settling down. No explanation will ever be sufficient, as we may never hope to be objective (indeed, I for one have given up the desire to be objective (1982)). All we may do is observe, watch rather than look at.

Outline of the Topic

In a number of places on earth, roughly between 8000 BC and 5000 BC, we see the first attempts by groups of people to 'settle down', to break a tradition of continuous moving around with the seasons, over larger or smaller areas, and to fix themselves spatially.

In a number of cases, two clearly distinct phases were recorded in this process. First, the shift from high mobility (often on a subsistence base of hunting, gathering and fishing) to limited mobility (for example on the basis of swidden or slash-and-burn cultivation and/or transhumance husbandry), and next, the shift from limited mobility to sedentarity (often on the basis of agriculture and herding, but sometimes on the basis of hunting, gathering and fishing or other subsistence activities).

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In many cases, such spatial stability was observed in archaeological situations to coincide with a number of other changes, among which the following are important: (1) increased dependence on a specific, and in some cases (agriculture/husbandry) fairly narrow, part of the total spectrum of available resources, (2) development of exchange networks linking settlements to a (much) wider area, (3) changes in the technology of building, storing, subsistence, etc., (4) increased human manipulation of the environment.

Although it is possible that the bias of present-day archaeological research shares the responsibility for the observation that there is a reduction in the number of resources used, it is part of the ongoing discussion on the topic, and I will include it in the argument.

Not always easily traced in the archaeological record, and therefore not so easily connected to the above, are a number of other changes which took place, concerning the organization and size of the groups involved. Anthropological examples from Western Polynesia seem to indicate, for example, that some form of incipient social and political stratification is generally tied to the existence of a spatially stable subsistence base and an exchange network if it is to be more than ephemeral (Irwin, personal comment). Under such circumstances, a 'Big-Man' may be able to gain an ascendancy over his fellows which ends, at the latest, with his death and which cannot be passed on to his offspring.

In archaeological discussion of the hunter-gatherer/husbandry-cultivation transition, we see a development from monocausal "explanations" to systemic ones, from environmental ones to explanations which stress aspects of human behaviour, and from explanations concerned with one case (Childe 1925; Braidwood 1957 and Binford 1968) to others which explain diverse cases (e.g. Flannery 1973; Rindos 1984), or purport to do so. Except for Sahlins' (1972) argument, all stress the needs and capabilities of the population and its environment in terms of matter and energy, and see energy needs as crucial. Whereas Braidwood's and Rindos' arguments are in a sense evolutionary, all others stress the fact that the hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence requires less work to achieve adequate subsistence than cultivation (and in Sahlins' case, agriculture in the 'Domestic Mode of Production' less than in integrated agriculture). Thus, except for Braidwood, all others search for a 'trigger' which might have "pushed the system over the threshold" to a new form of organization, or for a constraint which may have been lifted, to the same effect.

In the anthropological literature on intensification and the origins of 'Big-Man' societies, the discussion generally focussed on (a) the existence of a surplus as a necessary precondition for social differentiation,

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(b) the redistributive function which is accorded to the most centrally placed person(s) in such a differentiated society, (c) the unequal access to raw materials and more specifically prestige materials and prestige items in socially differentiated societies, and (d) the size of the population involved, cq. population growth as a precondition (to name but a few of the more prevalent). Again, the explanations concern themselves with the existence of, the need for, or the flow in, matter and energy.

When considering changes in the structure of more complex societies, some sociologists, anthropologists and archaeologists have been involved with the importance of the size of information loads and the efficiency with which they are processed (e.g. Mayhew and Levinger 1977; Johnson 1973, 1980, 1981; Van der Leeuw 1981; Wright 1969). Whereas these ideas seem eminently appropriate, to my knowledge they have not been applied to low-level social differentiation. I will briefly attempt to do that here, leaning heavily on some related literature. Next, I will take yet another perspective and concern myself qualitatively with information processing, i.e. with the changes in perception which must have accompanied 'settling down'.

Flows of Information keep Human Institutions together

In a continuum perspective, we cannot make clearcut and exact distinctions between human groups or between an individual and a group. If one also subscribes to Heraclitus' precept, no group may at any point of time be considered in a static manner: we cannot permit ourselves to think in terms of 'structures' or enduring 'organisations'. Yet, at any one point of time and space, some people are more related in their behaviour than others. I will propose that this may here be seen as due to exchanges which continually, but in different ways, take place between many people: flows, not of objects or of energy, but of information. 'Flow' is a continuum concept, and it may also imply organisation through permanent change (Prigogine 1978).

Any commodity which, by being exchanged, is to keep human groups and human institutions together must on the one hand flow freely among humans without predetermined channels, and on the other hand form its own channels once it is flowing (once human groups are together, they tend to stay together rather than disband at the same rate as they form). Moreover, when we look at human history, there seems to have been a distinct increase in the number of humans bound together in groups. The commodity which we are looking for must also be able to spread, i.e. it must be able to increase in one place, without concomitantly decreasing elsewhere. It is critical for any central concept that it is not subject to the law of conservation.

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Comparing the usefulness of the two major flow commodities introduced in the last section, one is struck by the fact that energy/matter is subject to the law of conservation. Energy/matter cannot spread. Moreover, it must always flow through channels which are external to it, or be organized by means which are not inherent in it. Lastly, it is due to the laws of conservation, that all explanations in terms of energy and matter are subject to the second law of thermodynamics (growth of entropy), which in the case of the social processes concerned would predict that more complex societies must be scarcer and shorter-lived than less complex ones. This clearly contradicts what is happening in the world. Thus, energy can never serve as the central concept in looking at cultural phenomena from a continuum perspective.

Information, on the other hand, seems to fulfill the requirements for this role (Van der Leeuw 1981; Rosen 1979). (It is interesting to note that in the first discussion of the concept of information by cybernetics engineers all treat information in the same way as energy: as flowing through electrical wires. In those early days the point was missed that information does not follow the law of conservation: it may channel itself. Bateson (1972) and others have stressed later the importance of the fact that humans may learn how to learn, i.e. that among humans information is self-organising). When I tell someone something, that person may retain that information without me losing it. Information may thus spread and accumulate altogether. Information is not subject to the laws of conservation. Groups sharing information may grow. Loss of information is ruled by an entirely different mechanism than increase of information is.

When several people share a fund of information they may coordinate their actions by further discussing such information. They thus organise themselves and their actions. Language is one form of such organization, trade jargon a more refined form of it which distinguishes the members of a trade group from the non-members. It is one of the properties of processing information that doing it creates rules for further processing, which makes it easier for those who participate in an exchange network to remain within it, than to learn the rules of yet another such network. Thus, information processing creates its own cohesion and its own channels.

I have argued that the processing of information creates information processing capacity (= organisation). When we are faced with problems (= unprocessed information) we devise a solution, based on and consistent with that organisation (paradigm, conceptual structure). We organise the information so that we may undertake actions which solve the problem. We retain the solution independent of the problem. It thus

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adds to the total amount of problem-solving capacity (= organisation) available, which will in future enable us to tackle similar problems. As no problem will ever be identical, tackling this second generation of problems is facilitated, but in turn will lead to perceiving even more problems. There is a deviation amplifying feedback between information flow and information processing capacity. This feedback could be seen as the factor behind increases in the sizes of societies and also in the complexities within societies. Whenever a problem seems too complicated we can do one out of two things:

> (a) We can devote more time to it (we specialise), but we keep tackling it on the basis of the same fundamental information processing organisation. If it keeps beating us, eventually we ask someone else, extending the size of the group involved in the same organisation and the size of the total information processing capacity with it. In the process, dependence between members of a group grows. This *quantitative* change may suffice to solve the problem.
>
> (b) We can change our approach (paradigm), looking at it from a different perspective. In doing so, we change our information processing *qualitatively*.

Both these kinds of changes occur, often together but also separately. However, if we are to clarify the issues at hand, it seems wise initially to deal with them separately.

The Quantitative Aspect: Accumulation of Information Flow, Group Growth and Social Differentiation

In the next few sections, I will deal solely with the quantitative aspects of growing information flows. It is therefore assumed in these sections that there are no qualitative adaptations going on at the same time.

Group size is tied to the efficiency of the organisation of the group. Thus, if there is a surplus in information processing capacity (and thus 'slack' to deal with problems effectively), birth rate and life expectancy increase as does group size. But inevitably, there comes a point when group size itself will create problems. Tuning the mechanisms of information transfer among the group's members will not keep pace with too rapid an increase in group size. This will result in centrifugal tendencies. The balance between information flow and information processing capacity thus seems to keep group size always more or less in tune with organisational level. When this is no longer the case, organisations fall apart.

The correlation between increases in group size and increases in specialisation and/or differentiation of functions, roles and statuses within the group might in this context be described as follows. Between

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people, messages are passed in a form which relates to the information processing organisation of the people involved. They are in a language mutually understood, and they are related to topics mutually known. Moreover, the topic which the message is about is transmitted (for example) by signals built into the context in which the message is passed (meals by candlelight signal romantic encounters).

The more messages are passed in one channel, and the more varied their content (increase in group size!), the easier there is a confusion. Such confusion is reduced by defining the contexts unambiguously and relating them directly to the nature of the messages. Different contexts create, as it were, separate channels for different kinds of messages. Within such channels, the chances for confusion are reduced. Social and functional differentiation and specialisation may thus be seen as a separation of channels.

One of the important aspects of social and functional differentiation in societies is that it tends to occur almost simultaneously *horizontally* (egalitarian division of labour, etc.) and *vertically* (hierarchisation). Why? Johnson (1978, 1980, 1981) argues, briefly, that when more than five sources of information have to be attuned to one another, so that they may act in an organised way, this entails too many communications between all the members of the group. It is more efficient that all members send their information to one centrally located member, who then decides upon this information and instructs all the members accordingly. Thus vertical differentiation is another efficiency device. It may occur at more than one level in order to ensure optimum interaction. Johnson demonstrates how stress in organisations occurs when information processing is not organised along these lines. For large groups a multi-tier hierarchy of near-pyramidal shape is inevitable (but see Van Bakel, in this volume).

Different Degrees of Differentiation

Following the above argument, I would like to conclude for the moment that it is acceptable to see social differentiation as inherent in any society which operates in group sizes which exceed certain numbers. Possibly the group size limits are those worked out by Birdsell (1953). But the degree to which social differentiation occurs in different societies varies considerably, as does the basis on which this differentiation is founded. It seems profitable now to look at the hunter-gatherer/cultivation-husbandry transition from this perspective. But beware: in the following I have oversimplified and cut up a very complex continuum. This is entirely a concession to presentation.

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In band societies, group size is very limited, and virtually all contact is face-to-face among a group of people who share everyday life. Decisions are made in an egalitarian manner by the whole group of people which is together at any point of time. They mainly affect that same group of people. However, the composition of that group may vary considerably from time to time, and decisions are not influenced by those who are absent. One might say that in band societies, information processing requirements and energy requirements keep each other more or less in balance. The level of group information processing is such that the energy limits of the environment keep group size small and group composition fluid. There is never occasion to build up such a powerful information processing capacity that the technological level is enhanced, so that more of the potentially available energy in the environment is harnessed. Yet, harnessing that energy would be the only means to make group size larger and group composition more stable so that a better information processing system could be organised. This — assumed — balance would be one way to explain the longevity of the hunter-gatherer (band) mode of social organisation.

In band organisation there is no differentiation in the sense with which we are here concerned. At most, there is task-specific and very short-time differentiation (such as having someone coordinate a hunting party for a few days). The most permanent and intensively used lines of communication seem to be between members of a nuclear family as long as they reside together. The next (very fluid and temporary) set of lines of communication is at the level of the band, the everyday face-to-face group. As soon as the bands involved in a mating network get together, for example in their yearly fishing binges (Ojibwa), the basic units (nuclear families) regroup themselves into extended families, so that the total number of groups is kept within acceptable limits (Johnson 1980).

This organisational change is a good demonstration of the fact that adaptation to an increased information load does not necessarily change the way in which information is processed qualitatively. When the Bushmen or the Ojibwa come together in the summer, they do not change their mode of perception, but only their social organisation, in response to the stress resulting from the vastly enhanced number of interacting people.

Upon settling down, the situation changes. For simplicity's sake, we will distinguish two settled situations.

(1) In some cases existing bands may have settled in close (face-to-face) proximity so that the existing communication channels will have been retained. The situation is much like that in band societies.

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(2) In other cases the bands will have been dispersed (settlement in individual farmsteads), and a few generations later each of these farmsteads will be a village, and members of the (larger) group are spread out over several villages. In the latter case, new communication channels will have been developed, as a replacement of or in addition to the extant ones. Decisions affecting the life in each village are no longer taken by the members of that village only, but also by others, elsewhere. Balanced reciprocity will rule the contact between different villages. The logical basis for the lines of communication between villages is kinship: *lineages* become the mainstay of such an information processing system, and age is an important determinant of the position one has in it. The older one is, the higher one is placed in the hierarchy. The common ancestry symbolizes the coherence of the group, the build up of the lineage determines the hierarchical structure of the organization.

'*Big-Man*'

In both situations 'Big-Men' seem to occur. In the former they are not necessarily heads of lineages, and their influence is confined to the face-to-face (village) group involved. In the latter, their influence is usually based on their position in a lineage, and it extends to all the settlements which are part of that lineage.

Case (1). It is typical of the 'Big-Man' form of organisation in single village face-to-face groups that differentiation is not as clear-cut or as complete as in more complex societies. The channels of communication are not entirely isolated from one another, so that political power, economic wealth, family relationships and other things together determine the status of the individual involved, and messages concerning all these aspects pass through the same channels. This is only to be expected in societies where no individuals specialise in one set of activities, and where even the 'Big-Man' generally participates in all the activities which are undertaken. In other words, nobody specialises in information processing except occasionally the 'Big-Man', who remains in place by constant manipulation of others (or, in other words, by regulating the information flow in the society).

A (sometimes extensive) clientèle is built up on the basis of distribution of wealth, which creates obligations to the person distributing it, which also serves to distribute wealth among the members of the society more evenly. As such the 'Big-Man' acts with the consent of the community at large. But as time proceeds, this link may become severed, so that the community is there for the 'Big-Man's' benefit.

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It is also in situations like these that controlling information about specialised resources becomes important. The 'Big-Man' does not so much control access to the resource, as manipulate knowledge about how to avail oneself of a resource.

Lastly, an important aspect of the kind of power which a 'Big-Man' has, is the supernatural. His power is sanctioned by 'the supernatural'. Either because the 'Big-Man' doubles as the symbol of supernatural power, or because he is supported by those who fulfill this function. In the latter case, clearly, we also see a beginning differentiation between the worldly realm and the supernatural.

Case (2). It is in the case of 'lineage 'Big-Men' ', who have influence over several villages, so that the information load is much heavier, that we see the first signs of vertical differentiation (hierarchisation) as a means to process information more effectively. At the 'top', the 'Big-Man' keeps his achieved status for most of his active life. Concomitant is a growing stability: a certain political structure can be stable over periods of one generation at the utmost. After the death of the old 'Big-Man', the new one builds up his own political power base. Although that it is different in details such as its membership, the structure of that power base will be constrained by the laws which govern information processing structures, and will therefore resemble the old one.

Another concomitant is an incipient differentiation between the political sphere and other spheres, such as the economic sphere and the sphere of family relationships. Decision-making channels in the society become, for the first time, distinct from the specific activity about which decisions are being made. At the same time they formalise themselves. That formalisation is a reduction in the information load which the society carries: when everyone knows who takes the decisions, no discussion is necessary.

When the information load becomes too heavy, the society falls apart at the top: the society is henceforth divided into segments of a lineage. That stage, however, is beyond the scope of the present article.

Sedentarisation and Information Load

Sedentarisation must have gone hand in hand with a disruption of the Catch-22 situation, mentioned in an earlier section, which kept energy expenditure and information processing more or less in homeostasis. Recent literature has clearly indicated that after the transition to husbandry-cultivation, more energy expenditure per head was required than before (e.g. Sahlins 1972).

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In order to understand this transition, it is important to distinguish information processing in relation to the non-human environment on the one hand, and communication (information processing in relation to the social environment) on the other. With an increase in group size, the former will increase linearly, whereas the latter will increase much faster (one egalitarian decision minimally requires two interactions between two people, six between three people, twelve between four people, twenty between five people, etc.).

Thus, if the group keeps increasing, and also the number of other groups with which it interacts (spatial packing), there will be an information overload in communication, rather than in dealing with the natural environment.

Apart from qualitative changes, which will be dealt with in the next section, this situation will also effect quantitative changes. These merit close scrutiny.

Within the hunter-gatherer (band) mode of subsistence between the Lower Palaeolithic and the Late Mesolithic, we observe among other things a growing territoriality (as manifested in regional artefact differentiation), and a growing precision of artefact shapes and functions. The increase in spatial circumscription will on the one hand have reduced the total variation a group must have dealt with in relation to nature, while on the other hand the routinisation must have increased as the same people encountered the same phenomena more often. The growing precision in artefacts could have had the same effect, as it related each kind of artefact closer to a specific task, and therefore reduced the risk of inadequate performance (reduction of variation), while making different instances of performance more similar (routinisation).

Both reduction of variation and routinisation will have reduced the information load involved in dealing with the natural environment, and may thus in part have compensated for the increase in communication resulting from group growth. Hence, toward the end of the Mesolithic, the same basic mode of subsistence could accomodate many more people than in the Lower Palaeolithic.

In order to reduce variation even more, a qualitatively different subsistence strategy was adopted: the number of species on which the group depended was reduced (shift to reliance on cereals, cattle and ovicaprids). To increase routinisation, control over the means of subsistence was increased (cultivation/domestication). This allowed for further growth of the size of interacting groups.

Once the new mode of subsistence was adopted, specialisation and exchange could reduce the information load per individual and/or group

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even more in every sector but the social. But the reverse of the coin was an increase in energy expenditure for the procurement of subsistence needs.

The Qualitative Aspect: Modes of Perception

The last section seems to point in the direction that the information processing involved in human communication is of a different ('cheaper') kind than that involved in making independent decisions concerning one's dealings with the environment. That finally confronts us with the qualitative differences in information processing.

People seem to have two essentially different modes of perception and decision-making. One perceives complex patterns of simultaneous phenomena in many (not consciously distinguished) dimensions (on the basis of visual, but also tactile, olfactory and other perceptions in interaction), while the other links sequences of phenomena together in one (perceived) dimension (Van der Leeuw 1981). Whether these modes of perception are innate (the famous two halves of the brain) or acquired through learning is irrelevant here, but some of their possible properties are not.

As human speech is to a considerable degree sequential, and therefore treats one topic (or aspect of a topic) after another, it is but a small step to assume that human communication is related to the sequential mode. Speech is moreover symbolic: it communicates complicated sets of perceptions by means of relatively simple symbols which stereotype these sets of perceptions (use of partes pro toto, etc.; cf Bateson 1972). The multi-dimensional simultaneous perceptual experience is, it seems, communicated sequentially in one or at most a few dimensions.

If we follow Heraclitus, and assume that everything is always in flux, and that two experiences are therefore never identical, the most effective response to any direct experience would seem to be one which is based on as complete a perception as possible. In our terms, a simultaneous multidimensional perception seems to have the edge. The more one is dependent for one's responses upon communicated perceptions, originally made by others and transmitted in simplified form, the less adequate one's reactions will be.

Such adequacy may, however, be enhanced by reducing the variability of the environment to levels compatible with the accuracy of responses based on communications. That is where control of the environment and routinisation come in. If a certain response has become a routine, it may be triggered by a communication, and yet be effective and accurate. Control of the environment results in a similar increase in effectiveness of responses.

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Settling Down and Modes of Perception

Most human behaviour seems to be based on a mixture of simultaneous and communicated perception, and what concerns us in this chapter are changes in the proportions of each in the mixture concomitant with settling down.

It follows from the last section that in order to hypothesise about these, we must take into consideration such things as (1) mobility, seasonality, presence or absence of territoriality, variations in the subsistence base, (2) social organisation, spatial organisation, extent and nature of communication, level of symboling, and (3) extent of control over the environment, size and variety of toolkit, etc.

In a highly mobile situation such as that of hunter-gatherers, in which only small groups of varying composition interact, direct perception seems the dominant element. Communication is limited to the face-to-face group, so that there is much shared experience and many non-symbolic means of communication are open to the participants. There is, as far as we know from ethnographic examples, virtually no control over the environment, so that responses to the environment must be based on assessment of a wide range of variability. If the group did not follow a repetitive spatial pattern over a limited area, e.g. if there was no territoriality (such as is conceivable for the Early Lower Palaeolithic?), it is even possible that the same people saw the same area only on a few occasions during their lifetime. But even if there was territoriality, seasonal and daily changes will have ensured that the natural environment was highly variable.

Fusion and fission within and between groups will have ensured continuous change in the adult social environment, so that the group's perception was also highly variable. Very few remains of signalling of message are preserved, and the (limited) variability indicates that the level of symboling was low.

We must conclude that the mobile hunter-gatherer way of life highly favoured multi-dimensional simultaneous perception.

We have pointed out that settling down reduced the scope and number of changes in the natural environment with which the members of a group were confronted. This reduction is the temporal dimension (permanent location), the spatial (smaller territory covered) and the qualitative one (through reliance on fewer species). Similarly, we have for this phase an increased range of areas where the environment was controlled: control over herds and fields, man-made shelter, etc.

On the other hand, as population densities, spatial proximity and mutual dependencies among human communities grew, the amount of interaction with the social environment increased quite rapidly.

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All in all, settling down seems to have favoured sequential, communicated, uni-dimensional perception and information processing. Its uni-dimensionality and sequentiality could make this mode of perception 'cheaper' in two senses:

(1) fewer variables are considered in decision-making (only those observed in one dimension), and (2) the sequential link between observation and decision makes for a more predictable outcome of decision-making than the interplay of many links in the simultaneous mode of perception. Thus, the efficiency of communication is enhanced.

Acknowledgement

No physical person is an independent entity, and thus I have reciprocal ties with many. In so far as I have to acknowledge future balancing, it is to two colleagues. A. A. Abbink has honoured me by discussing her recently completed thesis with me in a number of very stimulating sessions. Concerning change and stability, A. C. Pritchard tries to live what I, as yet, can only preach. Her example has been crucial in finding my way.

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ALBERT A. TROUWBORST

THE 'BIG-MAN': A MELANESIAN MODEL IN AFRICA

The concept of the 'Big-Man' is typically a concept developed in a particular ethnographic region, in this case Melanesia. It has not systematically or very frequently been applied outside this area despite the fact that many anthropologists may be prepared to agree with Claessen's conclusion that: "The big man essentially is found everywhere on earth" (Claessen 1974: 102).

It is my intention to give a few examples of the use of the 'Big-Man' outside Melanesia and to see whether we can derive certain conclusions from them concerning the general applicability of the concept.

The Melanesian 'Big-Man' in a Comparative Perspective

Though I think Claessen's conclusion as cited above a bit strong, yet I share his conviction that it is useful to try to apply the concept of the 'Big-Man' outside Melanesia. In my view, this does not need to imply that one should compare only if there is a complete similarity. Even in cases where we will find only elements or aspects of 'Big-Manship' it may be worthwhile to make the effort of a comparison.

One must, however, avoid two pitfalls. First, one should not stray away too much from the original meaning of the word as developed in Melanesia, or loose sight of its particular value and the reasons for which it was coined. Not every political leader, entrepreneur or patron should be called a 'Big-Man'.

Secondly, one should also avoid the tendency to use the concept of 'Big-Man' as a strict model in which one tries to force the data of another cultural reality. Something like that almost happened in the case of the use of African lineage models in the analysis of societies in New Guinea (see Barnes 1962).

It seems useful therefore to make first a few comments on the concept and the phenomenon of the 'Big-Man' itself. As it will appear, even in the literature on Melanesia, there are differences between the way in which the 'Big-Man' is presented and the way the 'Big-Man' manifests himself in various places.

To start again with Claessen, he belongs to those authors who insist very much on the weak position of the 'Big-Man', who according to him

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does not possess power but authority. As soon as the 'Big-Man' is no longer capable to satisfy the credit given to him by his followers, his position crumbles (Claessen 1974: 102). Still, in some cases discussed, Claessen talks about the building of the position of power of the 'Big-Man' concerned. This is an indication how difficult it is to give a precise characterisation of what the position of a 'Big-Man' implies.

As for Sahlins, whose classic article of 1963 is cited in all discussions on the 'Big-Man', he also lays much stress on the efforts of the 'Big-Man' necessary to defend and maintain his position. Nevertheless he describes the 'Big-Man' as a forceful personality, as someone with 'personal power' radiating of a 'true command ability' towards his followers.

In this clear-cut picture, especially as drawn by Sahlins, all kinds of shades and some corrections have gradually been introduced. They concern mainly the following matters. First, it is not generally accepted anymore that Melanesian political organisation as a whole can be characterised by the 'Big-Man'. Certain areas are known in Melanesia with real chiefs whose authority is based on hereditary rights. Not all Melanesian societies are ' 'Big-Man' societies' (see Godelier 1982a). A second point is that in the position of the 'Big-Men' themselves elements of succession can be discerned. Therefore, there are different kinds of 'Big-Men': they cannot all be reduced to one single type (for a discussion see Strathern (ed.) 1982: 35-49). Nevertheless, it may still be possible to state with Strathern: ''Big-men are often presented as self-made, and indeed in essence they are so'' (Strathern (ed.) 1982: 40).

Godelier in his discussions on social differentiation in New Guinea (Godelier 1982a and b) based on his research among the Baruya, distinguishes between 'Great-Men' ('Grandes Hommes') and 'Big-Men'. 'Great-Men' ('aoulatta') were what he found among the Baruya. These were men whose authority was not based on the accumulation and redistribution of wealth but on warriorship. Other positions of power or authority among the Baruya were also quite different from what one could consider 'Big-Men'. According to Godelier we therefore cannot reduce all societies on New Guinea to one type, i.e. to ' 'Big-Men' societies'. Typical for the 'Big-Man' is, in his view, his participation in the competition for wealth and his renown based on his success in it. Thus defined, 'Big-Men' are not found everywhere in New Guinea or in Melanesia in general (Godelier 1982a: 30-32).

Now, when one considers these various opinions concerning Melanesian 'Big-Men', I suggest that one should use the term of 'Big-Men' only in those situations in which at least two elements are found. Someone to be called a 'Big-Man' must first be a self-made man exerting personal power. The 'Big-Man' is an 'emergent individual' (Strathern 1982)

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Secondly, his authority and power must be based on his wealth and position in the exchange system.

In the next paragraph, I will have a look at a few examples of the use of the concept of a 'Big-Man' outside Melanesia, and see to what extent these two minimal elements in the definition have been retained. I will restrict myself mostly to African ethnography, the area I am most familiar with.

The Use of the 'Big-Man' Concept outside Melanesia

I will start this overview of the comparative use of the concept of the 'Big-Man' with the work of Clastres, who as will be known, bases his theoretical treatises mostly on his research with South American Indians (Clastres 1980). However, he has also given a detailed comment on Sahlins's 'Big-Man' article and it will be that comment to which I turn my attention here. Clastres, seemingly with little reservations, compared the Melanesian 'Big-Man' with the South American chief or cacique. Typical of both kinds of leaders is that they have to work very hard, "à la sueur de son front" (Clastres 1980: 183), to build up or to retain their position. It is not the 'Big-Man' who exploits his environment, on the contrary it is he who is exploited. The 'Big-Man' in this view does not possess power; power is something which rests with society as a whole. The reward of the 'Big-Man' is not power or wealth but prestige (Clastres 1980: 151).

Clastres's view on the 'Big-Man' is of course related to his general theoretical position concerning what he calls primitive societies. This position implies that a primitive society is seen as an undivided, egalitarian society in which there are no distinctions between rich and poor, exploiters and exploited.

This position differs from the one taken by the proponents of what Thoden van Velzen (1973) called the Big-Man paradigm. In this paradigm as developed by people like Baily, Barth and others, the elements most stressed are the 'Big-Man' as a 'powerful individual', as a 'cold and virile entrepreneur' or as a 'shrewd manipulator' (Thoden van Velzen 1973: 592 and 596). Another distinction from the model used by Clastres, but also I think from other Melanesian 'Big-Man' models is, that the Big-Man paradigm of Thoden van Velzen presupposes "a situation where substantial discrepancies in access to vital resources exist" (1973: 602). It will be clear that this Big-Man of Thoden van Velzen is another 'Big-Man' than the one found in Melanesia. Though Thoden van Velzen's Big-Man is a self-made and self-reliant man, he is a man with certain ascribed privileges who has the means to protect and

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stabilise his wealth, contrary to the Melanesian 'Big-Man' whose position crumbles at the end of his career. Another difference is that a Melanesian 'Big-Man' depends on his followers, whereas Thoden van Velzen's 'Big-Man' has followers who are dependent on him. It must be said, however, that Thoden van Velzen himself scarcely makes a reference to the Melanesian model. Only the term used in Sahlins' article seems to have inspired him.

Another comparative study makes explicit reference to the Melanesian 'Big-Men': Epstein's article entitled: ''Power, politics and leadership: some central African and Melanesian contrasts'' (Epstein 1969). The comparison here is between the Ndembu headman in Zambia and the Tolai 'Big-Man' of New Britain. What these two kinds of leaders have in common according to Epstein, is that both are ''engaged in a continuous struggle to acquire and maintain a body of followers ...'' (Epstein 1969: 62). There are great differences too, however, of which I think, is the most important that the African headmanship constitutes an office, whereas in the case of the Melanesian 'Big-Man' power is ''essentially personal and transitory'' (Epstein 1969: 64-65).

Another explicit use of the 'Big-Man' concept in Africa but with little reference to the Melanesian counterpart is also found in the book by Vincent (1968): ''The African elite. The big men of a small town''. Here of course the context is quite different from the one found in the classic descriptions of the Melanesian 'Big-Man'. The 'Big-Men' described by Vincent are local leaders in a small city, Gondo, part of a wider ex-colonial society. It is this wider society which is of large influence on the activities of the 'Big-Men' here: ''All the Big Men have obtained some of their social and economic facilities outside of the parish'' (Vincent 1968: 245). The career pattern of some of them, called mediators, is even characterised by the fact that they got their position by ''way of external institutions'' (Vincent 1968: 244). Apparently, the 'Big-Men' rely very much on outside resources. It is true that the Gondo 'Big-Man' has to work hard, mostly, but as an entrepreneur.

This quick review of some more or less comparative studies of the 'Big-Man' shows that there is a tendency to use the concept in a rather loose sense. Also, several of the defining elements of the Melanesian 'Big-Man' as enumerated in the beginning of this essay are lost in the process of comparison. This leads me to a few conclusions, which I will discuss in the next section.

Conclusions

First of all, my suggestion is that one should not use the concept of the 'Big-Man' indiscriminately for every kind of informal leader, en-

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trepreneur or mediator. As I suggested above, the minimum condition for someone to be called a 'Big-Man' is that he is a man who derives his position as a leader from his personal efforts in an exchange system.

Furthermore, one should not forget that the 'Big-Man' concept has been developed to characterise political systems as a whole. The 'Big-Man' is not simply a leader in his society, no, he is the man who dominates the whole political scene. He is the only man who plays a leading role on the supra-local level. When therefore, Barber talks about 'Big-Men' with the Yoruba, who also know a chiefly hierarchy, I think that he stretches the concept too far (Barber 1981: 727).

Another element in the problem that needs discussion here is the distinction, already mentioned, between leaders like the 'Big-Men' who are dependent on their followers, "fishers of men" (Sahlins 1963: 294) and leaders on whom the followers are dependent. This is the distinction also used by Harris (1978) who sees an important inversion in the distribution of power when 'Big-Men' and redistributional chiefs become kings of feudal states.

He contrasts the chiefs of the Trobriand and the Cherokee on the one hand with the king of the Bunyoro on the other: "the Trobriand and Cherokee chiefs were dependent on the generosity of the food producers; the Bunyoro food producers were dependent on the generosity of the king" (Harris 1978: 114). As one will remember, the same distinction was used when discussing the difference between Thoden van Velzen's 'Big-Man' and the Melanesian 'Big-Men'.

This distinction can also be used in a comparison between 'Big-Manship' and for instance East African forms of clientship. In East Africa, a client is very much dependent on the wealth and the protection of his patron. If he wants to climb the social ladder he needs the help of his patron. The patron on his side distributes his wealth as a favour. He can withdraw his favours from one client and give them to others.

However, the distinction is not a hard and steady one. The African patron also needs his clients, it is on them that he bases his power and influence. He must be able to trust them and cannot therefore ruthlessly exploit them. He would run the risk to loose his followers to competitors. In this aspect, the patron resembles the 'Big-Man.'

This brings me back to Claessen's statement quoted at the beginning of this essay. Though I do not agree without reservations with his opinion that the 'Big-Man' exists everywhere, I share his conviction that we find *elements* and *aspects* of 'Big-Manship' all over the world. I also think that it is useful to compare 'Big-Manship' with institutions of informal leadership elsewhere. It certainly sharpens our insight into forms of informal leadership in general.

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PETER KLOOS

CHANGING RESOURCES, CHANGING ENTREPRENEURS

Introduction

The anthropology of politics is the anthropology of power, and the anthropology of power is the anthropology of resources used to manipulate social relations. Power is an elusive phenomenon. Defined in the Weberian sense as the capacity to limit the behavioural alternatives of people it may reside in persons, but also in offices. The power of the king is only partly the power of the man referred to: it is the power of *kingship*. It is the ritual of enthronement and of consacration which confers kingly power on the heir to the throne, whatever his individual capacities. On the other hand, the power of the 'Big-Man' is contained in the individual so addressed, not in this title. It is proof of individual success and of power shown that gives a man the title of 'Big-Man'.

The distinction, of course, is an idealtypical one. Succession to kingship often presupposes a certain amount of power. As a rule a successor competes to some extent with other candidates and the strongest becomes king. In extreme cases candidates physically eliminate each other until only one remains. Ancient Ankole among the Interlacustrine states in East Africa is a well-known example (see Oberg 1940). 'Big-Men' on the other hand often start their career from a point of relative advantage. In 'Big-Men' societies anyone can rise to this position, but for some the chances to succeed are better than for others (see Thoden van Velzen 1973).

Yet the distinction between individual and office remains an important one. It points to the fact that polities differ in terms of structural rigidity or fluidity, and in terms of political manoeuvring.

In a situation of fluidity, where there is ample room for political manoeuvring, it is adeptness in handling available resources that marks the 'Big-Man'. Resources, however, differ in kind and may change over time. Under changing circumstances, when available resources change as well, one may find that the nature of political enterprise changes too. It is this idea of changing resources and the consequences for entrepreneurial leadership that I wish to explore in this article. I shall begin, in Section 2, with a general portrait of the political entrepreneur. In Section 3 I shall sketch the careers of four different kinds of political entrepreneurs, belonging to four epochs in the history of rural Sri

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Lanka. My first example concerns leadership as it existed during the period before the full development of kingship. My second example deals with leadership in North Central Province villages during the period when kingship was far away and colonial rule was not yet felt. My third example looks at colonial times, when villages were gradually incorporated into colonial bureaucracy. And my fourth and last example describes the vicissitudes of leadership to-day, in a situation where a feudal system has given way to a parliamentary democracy of the type called 'political machine' by Bailey (1969). The third and fourth example are based on research in a North Central Province village[1] in 1977-78. I call this village Kurunduvila, which is not its real name.

In the concluding Section 4 I shall pay attention to certain continuities in political enterprise as it found expression at various moments in a historical process that covers more than two thousand years.

Political Entrepreneur: a General Portrait

The prototype of the political entrepreneur in anthropological parlance is the Melanesian 'Big-Man', and the prototype of the Melanesian 'Big-Man is the *mumi* of the Solomon Islands, so vividly described by Oliver (1955).

Basing himself on Siuai data and other Melanesian 'Big-Men' Sahlins (1963, 1968) constructed what has become a technical concept in anthropology. This Melanesian portrait shows a man who personally acquires dominance over other people through strength of personality, persuasiveness, prowess as a warrior and particularly the calculated disposition of wealth. A man becomes a 'Big-Man' by calculated generosity. He organises feasts and supplies bridewealth to young men who as a result become his followers. Calculated generosity is also the key element in Claessen's picture of the 'Big-Man' (1974: 101).

As a political system the personal network of a 'Big-Man' remains unstable and his power is in reality only weakly developed. He is in no position to force people into obedience. Personal loyalty has continually to be reinforced. A 'Big-Man's' network falls apart when he dies:

> ''The death of a big-man can precipitate a regional political crisis'' (Sahlins 1968: 89).

The power of a 'Big-Man' outside his circle of immediate followers is even less than inside. Outside he is merely a man of renown (Sahlins 1963: 291), one 'Big-Man' among many other 'Big-Men'.

The concept of 'Big-Man', constructed on the basis of Melanesian political behaviour has been applied to societies outside Melanesia. As a

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consequence the concept has become wider, and more abstract. It had to: although the disposition of scarce resources remains central, the way to acquire these resources need not be the Melanesian one. Although generosity in Melanesia apparently gives no firm power over followers, in other situations the obligations ensuing from gifts can be enforced. Furthermore, and this is closely linked to the previous point, although the concept has been developed in relatively simple and basically egalitarian societies, the political behaviour characteristic of 'Big-Men' can also be noticed in more complex societies, where complex institutions and social stratification form part of the surroundings of political manoeuvre and may supply specific resources to be used (cf. Swartz (ed.) 1968).

To steer clear from Melanesia-centrism the more general term 'political entrepreneur' came into being:

> ''To the extent that persons take the initiative, and in the pursuit of profit in some discernable form manipulate other persons and resources, they are acting as entrepreneurs'' (Barth (ed.) 1963: 6; cf. Boissevain 1974: 147ff).

Political entrepreneurs express their profit in terms of power. They manipulate persons and resources to acquire power, they also use acquired power to manipulate persons and resources.

Since social situations differ in terms of persons and resources that can be manipulated, it stands to reason that the appearance of political enterprise differs as well. This is what I am going to demonstrate in the next section. In Sri Lanka, as compared to Melanesia, and within Sri Lanka from one historical period to the other, resources differ a good deal, and it is for that reason that I prefer the more neutral term political entrepreneur. The term 'Big-Man' has a distinctly Melanesian flavour I wish to avoid.

Changing Resources and Changing Political Manoeuvring in Sinhalese Society

Before the centralised state

Sinhalese political institutions go back to the 4th century B.C., when according to the great chronicles a North Indian prince Vijaya and his followers arrived in Sri Lanka and settled there. The centre of Sinhalese civilisation soon became Anuradhagama, later Anuradhapura, in the northern plains of the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka.

In the second half of the 3rd century B.C. Tissa of Anuradhapura was consecrated as king. He assumed the title *Devanampiya Maharaja.* Title and ritual were derived from the South Indian kingdom where Asoka reigned at that time (Ellawala 1969: 46).

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Tissa was not in a position to do more than to *claim* kingship over Sri Lanka, perhaps in an effort to emulate South Indian kingship.

A third, and more spectacular, figure was Dutthagamani, who ruled in Anuradhapura between 161 and 137 B.C.. Dutthagamani was a historical leader, but the story of his life became strongly blended with myth — a myth that was already created in the great chronicles like the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa* (see Geiger 1964; see also Robinson for oral contributions to the story of Dutthagamani).

Dutthagamani was born in Southern Sri Lanka (Rohana). He eventually waged war on the then Tamil usurper of the Anuradhapura throne, and finally slew the Tamil king in a personal fight before the gates of the royal city:

> "Near the south gate of the city the two kings fought; Elara hurled his dart, Gamani evaded it; he made his own elephant pierce (Elara's) elephant with his tusks and he hurled his dart at Elara; and this latter fell there, with his elephant" (Geiger 1964: 67-70).

And from that moment on Dutthagamani ruled over Lanka in single sovereignty — at least according to the chronicles.

The great Sinhalese chronicles *Dhatuvamsa*, and especially the *Dipavamsa* (written down in the 4th century A.D.), and the *Mahavamsa* (written down in the second half of the 5th century A.D.) are no historical records in the sense that the authors were driven by a desire to record what had happened. The chronicles should be seen as political statements written to legitimate the king's authority over the whole island. Only a few kings in the history of Sri Lanka ever reached this goal. Yet the political significance of the great king Dutthagamani goes far beyond this fact. Many villages (not only the village of Morapitiya, where Dutthagamani is reputed to have lived after having quarreled with his father, see Robinson 1968) trace at least part of their history back to Dutthagamani. In the village of Kurunduvila, where I did fieldwork, the villagers told me that Dutthagamani on his way to Anuradhapura stayed on the site, and placed a relic (a piece of cloth belonging to his mother Vihara Maha Devi) in a small dagaba he built in Kurunduvila. Leach (1961: 18) gives a similar story relating to Pul Eliya, northwest of Anuradhapura, a village unlikely to have been visited by Dutthagamani on his campaign to combat king Elara.

The name Dutthagamani means "wicked Gamani". He was called wicked because he did not want to obey his father who had told him never to attack the Tamil king. Gamani insulted his father by sending him a woman's garment. This gives an indication about his character. But the name Gamani too is informative. Gamani, and related terms like

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Gamika and Gramani, means 'head of an estate or a village'. It is derived from the term gama or grama, meaning *estate* (Codrington 1938: 1; Ellawala 1969: 51), minimally a paddyfield, maximally a corporate village.

Gunawardana (1982) argues convincingly that terms like *raja*, and also the presumptuous *Devanampiya maha raja*, i.e. "great king beloved by the Gods", used in the chronicles, may lead us to overestimate the true position of men who bore these and similar titles. According to Gunawardana these men were for a long time only village-based 'Big-Men' rather than kings. It seems that Dutthagamani too was such an entrepreneur, who used the resources of local village economy for political ends. It is significant that even the ancient capital originally was called Anuradhagama — only later on did it become a city. According to the *Mahavamsa* (Geiger 1964: 43).

> "Anuradhagama was built by a man of that name, near the Kadamba river (now the Malwatta Oya, flowing along the ruins of Anuradhapura). (..) Upatissa built Upatissagama .... (etc.)".

(in the next paragraph more information can be found on the establishment of villages as corporate enterprises).

Dutthagamani's story in the *Mahavamsa may* be read as a glorious fulfillment of what had already been forecasted, and as the victory of Sinhalese Buddhists over the Hinduist Damilas, the Tamils. This is probably what its author, a Buddhist monk, wanted it to be. Stripped from this political message it is the story of an ambitious local leader with a strong personality, a proud warrior who mobilized his followers to fight a rival entrepreneur — and succeeded. The *Mahavamsa* seems to suggest that this success also meant the final establishment of kingship, but Gunawardana argues that this was not the case. This whole period in the history of Sri Lanka bears witness of political fluidity and of numerous political entrepreneurs, fighting each other and trying to attract followers by conspicuous generosity (see *Mahavamsa* XXIII (Geiger 1964)), The Levying of the Warriors, see also Gunawardana 1982). During this period Sinhalese society was basically a society of villages. All these villages, each with its own tank and its own paddyfields, were quite independent. Although the circumstances and the local responses to problems of survival were similar, one should not make the error of regarding all these villages as exactly the same. Even to-day productive capacities differ a good deal from one village to another. These differences in productive capacities seem to have been responsible for differential political opportunities (cf. Gunawardana 1981). Political competition between village-leaders eventually culminated in kingship and a

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feudal structure in which the king delegated authority to be able to exert it. This also meant that after a period when military success depended upon available resources the relationship between power and resource changed its nature. When kingship was established it was the king who could construct huge irrigationworks by requesting people in the village to work for him: *rajakariya*, or king's service.

Precolonial dry zone village leadership

Anuradhapura remained the political centre of the Sinhalese kingdom until the 11th century. Between Dutthagamani's victory in 161 B.C. and the 11th century A.D. several confrontations took place between the Sinhalese and the Indian kingdoms of South India (the Chola kingdom in particular). In 1017 A.D. Anuradhapura was once more besieged by the Indian king Rajaraja, taken and sacked. It was recaptured by the Sinhalese, but they felt it wise to seek a political seat more to the south. This was the beginning of a movement that took the Sinhalese kings to Polonnaruva, to Kotte, and eventually, after the arrival of the Portuguese, to Maha Nuvara (Kandy). Meanwhile South Indian Tamils had created their own kingdom in the northern part of the island (Pathamanathan 1978). The provinces of Nuvarakalaviya and Tamankaduva, once the heartland of the Sinhalese realm became marginal in a double sense. Neither the Sinhalese king in Kandy, nor the Tamil king in Jaffna, felt inclined to risk war. The result was that both tended to avoid the mutual border area. This meant that such power as was left was in the hands of members of a local aristocracy, the Vanniyar, who were, though formally responsible to the Sinhalese king, in fact quite independent (see Pieris 1956: 233-261). One can hardly say that the Vanniyar ruled the provinces. They played a role as judges but for the rest rural society devolved from a centralised kingdom to isolated and relatively independent villages that mended their own affairs, without much outside intervention. Malaria reigned and countless villages were deserted — often to be rebuilt again. The basis of village economy was still irrigation cultivation. Although the necessary agricultural infrastructure quickly deteriorated after people had left (and neglect was often a factor for people to leave a site) these ruins of a dam and of feeding channels often attracted new inhabitants, who repaired the dam, cleared the jungle that had overgrown the site and established a new village.

The process of repopulation supplies us with interesting information about leadership at a time when Sinhalese kingship had ceased to exist (after 1815) and the effects of British colonial rule were not yet felt (and

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that was not much earlier than 1850 — at least in Nuvarakalaviya and Tamankanduva).

The villages had a strong corporate character, undoubtedly due to the fact that the inhabitants shared a common interest. The form of irrigation cultivation as practiced in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka offers the practitioners a simple choice between joint cultivation or no cultivation at all (cf. Leach 1961). Equality was emphasized and leadership meant in the first place *coordination*. This leader was called *gamarala*, *gama* meaning estate, *rala* being an addition turning the combination into a title.

When a group of men for whatever reason decided to establish a village of their own they first elected one or more *gamaralas*. Under their guidance the members of the group decided upon the amount of money they were going to invest in the project. In the 19th century the repair of a dam was carried out not by farmers any longer but by specialists who had to be paid (the *kulankatti*, a Tamil caste of earth workers). Each of the participants received a share (*pamgu*) of the land to be cultivated with water from the tank according to the size of his contribution. The *gamaralas* received a special, and somewhat larger, share, called *gamvasama*, as a return for their duties (the most important task of the *gamarala* was to regulate the flow of water from the tank to the fields).

Duties and privileges of the *gamaralas* often made it possible for them to enrich themselves, but the margins were small. They were cultivators like anyone else in the village and a number of levelling mechanisms prevented them from becoming landlords at the expense of the other shareholders. Besides, the title of *gamarala* was hereditary in a rather peculiar way. The title was less attached to persons than to particular pieces of land (the *gamvasama* land). Whoever controlled *gamvasama* land was a *gamarala*. Of course, the title was often kept within certain family lines, but one cannot speak of hereditary leadership in the customary sense of the term. This implied that leadership never became consolidated.

My point — and I do not have room to consider the subtleties of the system — is that during the time when the ancient provinces formed a buffer between the Sinhalese king of Maha Nuvara and the Tamil king of Jaffna (right up to the increasing influence of colonial rule), village leadership was of a distinct nature. Due to the fact that the area was situated between two centralized states (and later between the Sinhalese king and the European powers in Jaffna) military prowess lost the meaning it had at the time the Sinhalese state emerged. Subsistence cultivation — a combination of shifting cultivation and paddy cultivation[2] — required leadership but the opportunities for those in a position of relative power were meagre. The system was based on a premise of

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equality. Differences in wealth (in terms of paddy land owned) could and did develop, but under the given circumstances these differences could not develop into a local class structure. It was British rule that changed in this respect the circumstances and offered opportunities for those who saw them that had not been there before.

How to manipulate colonial bureaucracy

When the British dethroned the last Sinhalese king in 1815 and incorporated the kingdom in their colonial empire, the Vanniyar remained in charge of the Northern Dry Zone for several generations. In 1834 the British administration appointed members of this regional aristocracy as so-called *Rata Mahatteya*, or Senior Native Agents, placed directly under the (British) Government Agent. The ancient district Nuvarakalaviya consisted of three sub-districts, each with a *Rata Mahatteya* at the top. The middle level consisted of *Korale*'s, and the lowest official was the *Arracci*, charged with administrative responsibilities over up to ten villages. Water management was given to a special officer, the *Vel Vidana*. The *Arracci* was appointed by the *Rata Mahatteya* and this was a new element in village politics: village leadership had become an inter-hierarchical role.

The *Arracci* who was in charge of the village group to which Kurunduvila belonged lived at the beginning of this century in one of the neighbouring villages. He was an old man already. In Kurunduvila lived at that time an ambitious, bright young man, who belonged to a *gamarala* family. Since the British had changed the system the title *gamarala*, however, had become empty. The young man therefore decided to go and assist the old *Arracci*, as an unpaid *leekam*, or secretary. This activity brought him in regular contact also with the *Rata Mahatteya*.

About 1930 the *Rata Mahatteya* wanted to acquire a piece of land near the newly constructed railroad. As a civil servant, however, he was not allowed to buy Crown Land. The bright young man from Kurunduvila knew a solution. It was he who, with the money of the *Rata Mahatteya*, bought a suitable piece of land, and immediately sold this piece, which by the transaction had become private property, to the *Rata Mahatteya*. It was understood between the two that the *Rata Mahatteya* eventually would appoint this young man as the new *Arracci*. And so within a few years after this transaction, the ambitious young man became *Arracci* — by skillfully making use of the new circumstances that had been brought about by the colonial government.

His function brought him advantages from the moment he was appointed. Belonging to an important family he already possessed land, but he immediately began to increase his property, using among others

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his salary and his knowledge as go-betweens between villagers and government. He occasionally lent money to people who were in urgent need of cash, and graciously received a piece of land when they could not repay. He manoeuvred people into lawsuits, which meant again that they needed money. Using mortgage as a means he also succeeded in such cases in acquiring land. Even if he did not himself get the land, such a process meant that several villagers lost the land they had.

Occasionally he overplayed his hand. Once he illegally constructed a connection between a water supply and his own field. As a local authority he tried to convince his superiors that this was an ancient channel. The villagers succeeded in by-passing him, and he was reproached and fined. But he stayed in office.

Compared with the village leader of the pre-colonial period his power had a new dimension: because he was the lowest official in a bureaucratic structure his word was backed up by the colonial administration, which usually relied on these officers for their information regarding what happened in the villages (this situation made these village leaders also more vulnerable in a new sense: the fact that they were appointed by higher level officers implied that they could also be fired; whether such a possibility may become a reality will be seen in paragraph 3.4).

Interesting enough the power of people such as this *Arracci* increased as time went on. Especially the British Government Agents kept direct contact with people in the villages. They travelled by horse, cart or bicycle through their district, stayed overnight in small, local resthouses, and usually were well-informed. With the introduction of cars, railroads, etc., the frequency and intensity of contact between higher officials and villagers became less, which meant that those having interhierarchical roles, like the *Arracci*'s could better manipulate the situation than before.

The *Arracci* is no longer a *primus inter pares*, like the *gamarala* fundamentally was. In the past the *gamarala* usually did possess more land than the average man of his village, but not much more, because there was no possibility for him to work a large piece of land. The new village leader was in a different position, partly because a new group of people came into being: those without land, or with land they could not cultivate (see Kloos 1981). Such persons were willing to work for money — in fact, they had to. Consequently, together with a new form of leadership the basically egalitarian village began to change into a village with economic classes. The new form of leadership is not the only factor in this process, but it is an important one, because, as was explained above, the *Arracci* was instrumental in alienating land from a number of people in the village.

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Parliamentary democracy and its impact on village leadership

Sri Lanka — at that time still Ceylon — became independent in 1949. Universal suffrage dates back to 1931, but it is not the elections as such that are important in this context. Sri Lanka's electorial system is based on districts. The MP — Member of Parliament — has a double role. In parliament he or she represents the political majority of his or her district. In the district he or she represents the national political system. In parliament the MP's primary duty is to control the activities of the cabinet. In the district the MP acts as intermediary between the central power and centrally available resources on the one hand, and the voters on the other. This is much more important than may appear at first sight. One of the prerogatives of the MP is to appoint, or to transfer, schoolteachers and many other government officials in his district.

The political system of Sri Lanka is what Bailey called a 'political machine'. Although the two main political parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) do differ in their political ideology, the difference is of secondary importance compared with the fact that an elected MP has to pay off his success to his voters in terms of jobs, etc. Given his power to transfer and to appoint people, this means that immediately after elections, and especially when a UNP MP succeeds an SLFP candidate (or vice versa) there is a huge amount of transfers and appointments. The new MP has to reward his followers and therefore he has to make room by transferring non-followers to other places. Such transfers are called 'punishment transfers', for obvious reasons. UNP MPs transfer SLFP voters to undesirable backwood schools, to create room in more desirable places for followers, and *vice versa*.

The access of an MP to resources in a more general way (such as funds for development projects) depends upon the outcome of the elections at large, and upon the political colour of the new government. An SLFP MP under a UNP government has less access to scarce resources than a UNP MP under the same government.

Party loyalty is, of course, locally well known, and the whole machine of the political parties therefore has its impact on the local administration. It is not only the MP himself who plays an active role. Local party leaders, having access to their MP, make use of the situation even for their own local purposes. At least, that is what happened in Kurunduvila.

Kurunduvila lies in a district that for a number of years had a SLFP MP. Several local people — schoolteachers but also the successor to the *Arracci*, the *Grama Sevaka* — belonged to the SLFP and some of them ow-

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ed their jobs to their representative. The landslide elections of 1977, which brought the UNP in a position of almost total power (in the form of a comfortable majority in Parliament), also brought victory to the UNP candidate in the district to which Kurunduvila belongs. This weakened the position of many people considerably. The effect was immediate. The majority of the local schoolteachers, for instance, were transferred right away and it took many weeks until their successors arrived. But the changes also affected the local power structure, and the local *Grama Sevaka* in particular.

The *Grama Sevaka* was a man whose activities were not undisputed. Because this lowest officer in the administrative hierarchy is appointed from a higher level to which the villagers have no simple access his position was relatively strong. Besides, he was the son of the former *Arracci.* Finally, he owned a lot of land in the village, which made his position also in an economic sense fairly secure. Therefore, the majority of the villagers thought twice before they dared to take action against him.

The outcome of the elections of 1977, however, altered this. In 1978 the *Grama Sevaka* ran into conflict with certain people of his village, including one or two important UNP members. One of those went to his MP and had his adversary transferred. Just like some 50 years ago changes outside the village had changed the possibilities for political manoeuvre inside the village itself.

Concluding Remarks

In *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx wrote

> ''Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past'' (quoted from Fischer 1973: 93).

To this I would like to add: and under circumstances created by outside forces. The various local leaders I described in the preceding paragraphs all made their own history even though a good deal of the changing circumstances were quite beyond their control. Even though they themselves did not create the administrative bureaucracy in the second half of the 19th century, nor the political machine in the second half of the 20th century, they jumped at the new opportunities that became available for political entrepreneurs.

This readiness to make use of changing conditions of local village life betrays an element that did not change over the centuries and that goes back to the era of early entrepreneurs who created the Sinhalese state: from the earliest history onwards Sinhalese politics have a distinct per-

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sonal, instrumental, transactional nature. Political relations were transactional relations — and transactional relations they have remained until to-day. What did change were the resources used in transactions. Understandably the nature of the resources available under given circumstances limited the scope of political relations. During the period of state formation agricultural production but also military prowess were important for ambitious leaders. In the centuries that followed the fall of Anuradhapura the opportunities for political manoeuvring dwindled — at least in the desolation of the North Central Province. The early colonial administration suddenly offered new opportunities for those who saw the chances: new types of relationships with outside powers could be mobilized for internal political affairs. Increasing state interference increased also the number of alternatives in this respect. What remained the same was the strongly instrumental view on personal relationships in which all kinds of resources are seen as a means for political ends.

NOTES

1 Fieldwork in Sri Lanka was made possible by leave of the University of Leiden and by a grant from the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO).

2 The emphasis here is on paddy cultivation. It should be understood that shifting cultivation is in the North Central Province at least as important as paddy cultivation.

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JARICH G. OOSTEN

'BIG-MAN' AND IHUMATAR: PERSONAL POWER AND LEADERSHIP IN MELANESIA AND THE CANADIAN ARCTIC

The 'Big-Man'

Sahlins (1963) developed an analytical distinction between two types of leadership-figures: the 'Big-Man' and the chief. The chief is a familiar figure in anthropological literature, but the 'Big-Man' is rather a newcomer, who has recently gained his popularity, particularly in network analysis. The idea of the 'Big-Man' implied a new perspective on the dynamics of political development and it has been applied to many cultures outside Melanesia. Here we will examine its value as a conceptual tool for the anthropological study of power and leadership in other cultures. Leadership among the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic will serve as a testcase for an assessment of the explanatory power of the concept.

According to Sahlins the 'Big-Man' is a leader in a relatively simple political system. Sahlins' perspective is evolutionistic. Political systems are thought to develop from simple to more complex forms and the appropriation of an economic surplus by the political establishment plays a crucial part in the process.

'Big-Man' and chief are embedded in different types of political organisation. Melanesian societies are usually organised in small separate and equal political blocs, consisting of autonomous and kinship-based residential groups and comprising seventy to three hundred people. Polynesian societies are usually organised in an extensive pyramid of groups, capped by the family and following of a paramount chief. The hierarchy of chiefs is usually determined by a ranked lineage or conical clan system. Political units in Polynesia often comprise several thousands of people. (cf. Sahlins 1963: 159-160). Polynesian chieftainship is well institutionalised. The chiefs hold clearly defined offices and are endowed with many prerogatives and privileges. They have claims on the labour and product of the population and control the cumulation and distribution of an economic surplus. Melanesian leadership is not based on an institutional office, but on personal power and personal networks.

Sahlins considers the chief and the 'Big-Man' to be two distinct sociological types, ''that is to say, differences in the powers, privileges, rights, duties and obligations of Melanesian 'Big-Men' and Polynesian

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chiefs are given by the divergent contexts in which they operate'' (Sahlins 1963: 161).

Institutional distinctions, however, become manifest in differences of personality. Sahlins presents an impressionistic sketch of the personality of the 'Big-Man' in a characteristic derived from our own culture. Such a sketch tends to become a caricature, as is noted by Sahlins himself, but even so it may well be that the popularity of the concept of the 'Big-Man' is to a large extent based on the personality that is attributed to him by Sahlins:

> ''The Melanesian 'Big-Man' seems so thoroughly bourgeois, so reminiscent of the free enterprising individual of our own heritage. He combines with an ostensible interest in the general welfare a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation. His gaze, as Veblen puts it, is fixed unswervingly to the main chance. His every public action is designed to make a competitive and invidious comparison with others, to show a standing above the masses, that is the product of his own personal manufacture'' (Sahlins 1963: 162).

Thus the Melanesian 'Big-Man' is described as a self-made, modern capitalist. The Polynesian chief on the other side resembles much more a feudal ruler.

The authority of the 'Big-Man' is based on personal power. Since he does not succeed to an office he needs a loyal faction of followers. He has to attract them by his personal skills and he should be prepared to demonstrate these skills in order to maintain his hold on them. The 'Big-Man' should have magical powers, gardening prowess, mastery of oratorical style, and perhaps bravery in war and feud. Most of all he should be able to amass goods, most often pigs, shell money and vegetable goods and he should distribute them in ways which build him a name for cavalier generosity, if not for compassion (Sahlins 1963: 164). Prestige is derived from great public give-aways. The 'Big-Man' amasses power. He creates and uses social relations which give him a leverage on others' production and the ability to siphon off an excess product (Sahlins 1963). Thus there is not only redistribution, but also extortion. The 'Big-Man' has to exploit the very people that are supporting him. Obviously this creates a serious weakness in his position. If he does not exploit his people sufficiently his power will be limited, but if he exploits them too much he runs the risk of loosing his position or even being killed (cf. Sahlins 1963: 167-168). The 'Big-Man' political order thus develops its own internal constraints.

Sahlins argues that from an objective standpoint the 'Big-Man' promotes long-term societal interests by creating a supra-local organisation (Sahlins 1963: 166). This objective standpoint obviously expresses

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Sahlins' own evolutionistic perspective. It is by no means clear what benefits this particular type of political order has to offer to the followers of the 'Big-Men'. Why should they subject themselves to a type of leadership that is of necessity based on their exploitation. Sahlins does not solve that problem. He reduces the problem of leadership to a struggle for personal power. As a consequence other interests, ideas, values, norms, etc. are systematically neglected. We may assume that the 'Big-Men' do not only strive for personal power, but also for status, recognition, etc. Their actions will also be influenced by ideological and religious convictions. They will not only further their own personal interests, but also those of their families and factions. We may assume that good leadership implies that those interests will sometimes have to prevail over their own. Thus the motives and considerations of the 'Big-Men' will usually be more complex than a simple quest for power. Sahlins' view on the 'Big-Man' is therefore rather onesided and the perspective of the participants is lacking almost completely. It is only fair to say that in his later work Sahlins has shown a much better understanding of the importance of the perspective of the participants.

Sahlins' critics have emphasized that he simplifies and neglects the ethnographic context. The power structure of Melanesian societies is much more complex. Thus councils of old men exercise considerable power in many societies. Moreover, Sahlins neglects the rules that control the organisation of society and particularly the ways in which power can be exercised (cf. Claessen 1984 for a discussion of the criticisms of Sahlins' 'Big-Man' concept).

Sahlins' preoccupation with personal power is characteristic of much traditional anthropological and sociological research. The concept of power was usually used in the sense of Weber as the chance to assert one's own will (cf. Weber 1964: 38. ''Macht bedeutet jede Chance innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen Wiederstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht''). Anthropologists were inclined to overrate the power of political dignitaries in other societies of overruling others. Notably Clastres (1974) has criticised this tendency. In ''La société contre l'état'' he demonstrates that the powers of Indian chiefs in South American societies were actually very limited. They were masters of speaking. It was their task to expound the traditional ideas and values of their cultures, not to enforce their observation. But even where chiefs possessed more power it made a great deal of difference whether they enforced traditional norms and values or only furthered their own case. As a rule the legitimacy of leadership is based on its adherence to traditional rights, norms and values. As a consequence it is not so much the

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capacity to assert one's own will against others as the capacity to rule others in accordance with traditional norms and values and the interests of one's followers that constitutes the core of leadership.

Studies of leadership therefore require a careful examination of the norms, values and interests in different societies. By careful examination of the position of leaders in their cultural context we can assess the explanatory value of the concept of the 'Big-Man' for the anthropological study of power and leadership.

The cultures of the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic in the first decennia of this century provide us with a testcase. Traditional Inuit society was often considered to be very simple (cf. Hoebel on law — 1964 —; Rasmussen on religion — 1929, 1930 and 1931). Political organisation was usually thought to be non-existent. Yet we find leaders in Inuit society who exercised considerable influence. Whether they can be considered 'Big-Men' remains to be seen.

The Ihumatar among the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic

The traditional cultures of the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic have been extensively described by Boas (1888; 1966) and the Danish ethnographers of the 5th Thule expedition (Birket Smith 1940; Mathiassen 1928; Rasmussen 1929, 1930 and 1931). The Inuit led a nomadic existence. Most groups hunted seal and walrus in winter and caribou in summer. During the winter season they settled down in local groups of 15-40 people. This was the period of the song festivals, the great religious feasts and the seances. In summer the Inuit spread over the land in small units to hunt the caribou. The transition from summer season to winter season was marked by strict rules and ritual injunctions. The contrast between the two seasons inspired Mauss and Beuchat in their well-known analysis of the social life of the Inuit. They considered the alternation of two different modes of life an intrinsic rhythm of social life, moving between an individualistic and unsocial behaviour and a collective and social behaviour in a pendulum movement (Mauss 1966: 470-475). The Inuit who lived in the interior did not conform to this pattern. They did not hunt sea game and were entirely dependent on the caribou.

During the winter season the local groups usually comprised several families. The composition of these families varied considerably. Two brothers might join the family of their father with their wives and children, two sisters could form a family with their husbands and children, etc. Unmarried people usually joined the families of their married relatives. A sufficient number of men and women in a settle-

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ment was indispensable for survival. The men hunted and provided food, the women prepared food, sewed clothes, took care of the children, etc. Kinship relations were the most important ones in the fabric of Inuit society. Other relations were usually embedded in the context of kinship. Thus namesakes, who should support each other, could take the same position in kinship organisation.

Several forms of partnership crossed the family lines. A strong bond was thought to exist between song partners, who passed the drum to each other at song festivals. They should be intimate friends and exchange of wives between song partners was encouraged. The Netsilik had developed a complex system to divide seal meat. A seal was divided into 14 parts. Each hunter had twelve partners, who shared their meat with him. Partners exchanged the same part of a seal. Close relatives or people who shared meals could not be partners. Joking relations, avoidance relations, etc. also contributed to the social cohesion of Inuit society (cf. Oosten 1976: 14).

The family was usually led by an *ihumatar* (Iglulik) or *ihumatsaq* (Netsilik). The word means 'he who thinks'. As a rule the *ihumatar* was an experienced elderly hunter. His position did not imply an official function, but a rather diffuse leadership. The Inuit usually listened to him and followed his advice, but he had no formal authority. He did not give orders, but he stated his opinion and the Inuit could decide for themselves whether they wanted to follow his advice or not. In the discussions about the selection of the hunting place, the length of the hunt, etc. each Inuk could have his say, but most value was attached to the opinion of the *ihumatar*. If the Inuit decided to disregard the opinion of the *ihumatar* this usually resulted in tension in the family and could even lead to a break up of the group.

Several factors contributed to the position of the *ihumatar*: personal qualities (as a leader, as a hunter, etc.) age, position in the family, number of sons, etc.. When the *ihumatar* became too old the leadership was usually taken over by one of his brothers. A local group usually had an *ihumatar* too, usually the leader of the most important family in the settlement. His position was structurally the same as that of the *ihumatar* in the family (no formal authority, diffuse leadership). Sometimes tensions arose when the leader of another family presented himself as a rival. This tension seldom came to the surface and as a rule the local group split up and one of the families moved to another place (cf. Oosten 1976: 12-13).

The distribution of food, skins, etc. was determined by traditional rules and customs and the *ihumatar* could not control the process of

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distribution. Appropriation of a surplus was out of the question. It was very difficult for an *ihumatar* to assert his own will against the opposition of others. In Inuit culture no one has to obey anyone else and it is considered to be very rude to give orders to another person. There was no legal authority that enforced law, and prosecution of transgressors of traditional norms and values was not organised along formal lines. When a crime was committed it was left to the offended party to take action. Homicide tended to evoke homicide, but a formal system of blood revenge did not exist.

If a conflict arose between two local groups because of a case of homicide the *ihumatar* could take the initiative to organise a revenge party (cf. Balikci 1970: 184).

The song festivals were the occasions where conflicts could be settled in a more peaceful way. The opponents derided each other and the man who got the audience on his side was the victor. Sometimes the adversaries exchanged blows. The song feasts were thought to solve the conflicts but often they only intensified them.

Inuit who did not conform to the values and norms of Inuit society were laughed at. If this did not have any effect they were just left alone. This did not mean that they were excluded from all daily activities or social contact, but they were no longer regarded as persons of any account. The Inuit were extremely sensitive to these mechanisms of ridicule and ostracism which were already important means of pressure in the process of socialisation. Emotional restraint was an important virtue. Aggression and dominant behaviour were discouraged in young children (cf. Briggs 1970; 1979). An Inuk should not push himself ahead of others or show the slightest ambition to control others. This made leadership among the Inuit such a complicated affair.

The social disapproval of expressions of uncontrolled emotionality could lead to serious tensions in the individual. According to Balikci there were many cases of suicide among the Inuit (cf. Balikci 1961). Latent accumulated tension probably was the main cause for *pibloqtoq*, the famous arctic hysteria. Unresolved conflicts could also lead to witchcraft, itself a cause of new tensions and conflict.

If witchcraft was suspected an *angakkoq* (shaman) was consulted. The *angakkut* were mediators between men and spirits. They were able to go into a trance and in that state they could communicate with the great spirits and perceive all souls. They controlled helping spirits who performed many services for them. The *angakkut* were responsible for the diagnosis of illness and other misfortune. A system of ritual injunctions played an important part in Inuit society. Illness, absence of game, bad weather, etc. was often thought to be a result of transgressions of these

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injunctions. As a consequence the balance between mankind and the spirit world was disturbed. The *angakkut* often imposed special ritual injunctions on the transgressors, his family or the whole community to restore this balance. In this way they could exert considerable influence. The boundaries of the personal interests of the *angakkut* and those of the community were not always clear and this offered the *angakkut* ample space for manipulation to enlarge their prestige or pursue their own interests. Many examples are given in ethnographic sources of *angakkut* who tried to use their magic powers for their own benefit. Hall already mentions the case of an *angakkoq* who tried to force a woman to sleep with him (Hall 1864: 320).

The Inuit had no obligation to obey an *angakkoq*. Every adult Inuk was able to perform as an *angakkoq* if the situation required it (cf. Oosten 1981), but the Inuit distinguished between highly qualified *angakkut*, who controlled many helping spirits and were advanced in the techniques of trance, and *angakkut*, who were considered to be less effective. All Inuit were familiar with the techniques of shamanism and they could judge very well whether the *angakkut* acted in accordance with the interests of the community or pursued only their own interests. An *angakkoq* of the latter type was easily accused of witchcraft. Techniques of witchcraft often consisted of deliberate pollution. Hair, nails or an image of the intended victim were mingled with an impure substance like menstrual blood and thought to cause his death. *Angakkut* were thought to be experts in magical techniques and therefore liable to become witches. Witches were ostracised and sometimes killed.

An *angakkoq* who was thought to serve the interests of the community, however, could play an important part in the prevention of stress and conflict in the community. Therefore it is not surprising that the *ihumatar* often also performed as an *angakkoq*.

Conclusions

The *ihumatar* did not have economic, legal or political prerogatives that enabled him to assert his will against others. In that respect he had no power. He played an important part in the process of decision-making in those settings, that were not regulated by custom. Distribution of food and skins were determined by cultural rules and the *ihumatar* could not appropriate surplus production.

Transgressions of ritual and ethical codes by an *ihumatar* were not considered to be different from those of other Inuit. Like them the *ihumatar* ran the risk of being ostracised or even murdered. His position as *ihumatar* gave no scope to exploit other people. The *ihumatar* derived

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his position from the respect and recognition of other Inuit. Once he lost these he could not force them to remain loyal to him. Obviously this type of leadership differs considerably from the leadership of the 'Big-Man'. The *ihumatar* may have aspired prestige and status, but he did not strive for personal power or accumulation of wealth through exploitation of his followers. Leadership among the Inuit conforms in many respects to the patterns described by Clastres (1974) and the traditional concept of power is ill suited to describe the position of the *ihumatar*. The concept of the 'Big-Man' as developed by Sahlins, is too much based on an ethnocentric preoccupation with personal power to be of much value as a theoretical concept for the anthropological study of leadership.

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TOM BLOEMERS

A CART BURIAL FROM A SMALL MIDDLE IRON AGE CEMETERY IN NIJMEGEN

Even in systematic research designs, coincidence and finder's luck continue to play a role which is not to be underestimated in archaeological fieldwork. Thus it was in Nijmegen, where in the wake of the long term excavations of the Roman occupation by the State Service for Archaeological Investigations in the Netherlands (R.O.B.) a small, yet interesting cemetery of the Middle Iron Age was unexpectedly revealed in passing. Small, because there were only five graves, interesting because one of these graves contained the remains of a cart and horse gear.

The Cemetery[1]

The cemetery was laid out on the summit of the push morain at Nijmegen, and is only about 50 meter from the steep northern edge, from which there is a wonderful view over the Gelderse Poort, the place where the rivers Waal and Rhine break through the morain (Figure 1). The five burials are scattered over an area of no more than 30 × 10 meter. Three graves lie close to one another in the south, two others — including the cart burial — lie to the North, more widely spaced (Figure 2). Immediately to the North of the vehicle burial was an extensive, deep disturbance and a very large area outside trench number 60 to the east of the three burials was also badly disturbed. The possibility that there were originally more burials here is therefore not entirely excluded. On the other hand, no other burials were located in the undisturbed areas which extended 10 meter to the East and 25 meter to the West.

The cremated human skeletal remains were interred in small, more or less circular pits (30-80 centimeter in diameter). The pits extended no more than 10-20 centimeter below the excavated surface (38.49-38.69 + OD) and 50-70 centimeter under the supposed Roman surface: they can therefore have been 50-70 centimeter deep. Only relatively small quantities of rather finely burnt bone fragments were found, with scarcely any charcoal. Taken in conjunction with the clean fill of the grave pit, this could indicate that for the burial itself only the bone fragments were collected — with extreme care — from the burnt-out pyre. There were no

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traces whatsoever of any structures around the graves. The southern three burials lie so close to one another (c. 2 meter) that they could never have been covered by individual mounds, though a collective tumulus is a possibility. The distance between the two northern graves is about 10 meter, sufficient for the construction of a mound over each of them separately. Visible traces of any possible mound will have fallen victim to levelling during the intensive Roman occupation of the site. Indeed, four of the five graves lie exactly under a Roman street!

The cart burial no. 60/9 (also cf. Bloemers, Louwe Kooijmans and Sarfati 1981: 73).

1. *The grave and the retrieval method*

The largest grave pit (70 × 80 centimeter) was situated to the North, about 10 meter from its nearest neighbour (Figure 2 no. 9). When, during clearance, it became obvious that the grave contained a large quantity of ironwork, the entire grave was lifted in a metal container and was transported to the conservation laboratory of the R.O.B. at Amersfoort. Here, where the grave could be cleaned up at leisure and with due attention, it became increasingly evident just how important the find was. In places the ironwork had corroded to an impenetrable mass with the gravelly sand of the push morain. During the process of restoration it was decided to conserve this part — which contained both the horse bits as well as the nave-hoops — without attempting to separate the lumps. The tyres lay somewhat apart; it was not possible to preserve them in their entirety. During treatment, a full-size location sketch and a photographic record were made. Though cremated bone was recovered, there was no trace of any charcoal.

2. *Description of the grave goods*

2.1 *Weapons*

The remnants of two or three weapons were recovered from amongst the corroded iron: a spear, an arrow or small spearhead and a shaft which possibly belonged to another small spearhead.

The spear was broken into three fragments, which lay in correct alignment in the grave and which fitted together (Figure 3). The weapon was not deliberately bent, so it is unnecessary to suppose that the breakage occurred deliberately prior to deposition in the grave. The total length of the spear, including the shaft is 62 cms. The hollow part of the socket is not perfectly round (length at least 5.3 cms., greatest diameter 2

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cms.). The shaft was possibly longer originally since a rivet (0.15 cms. thick) is driven through the metal about 2.5 cms. from the bottom. The maximum width of the blade is 5.5 cms., the tip is forged to a narrow point with a pronounced midrib.

The small spear or arrowhead is incomplete: the point and part of the tang or socket are broken off (present length ca. 4.5 cms., originally possibly *circa* 6 cms.). The base of the tang is massive and oval in shape and it is not entirely clear whether the blade had a midrib.

A socket, hollow but for the last 0.5 cms. (7.5 cms. long, 0.6-1.5 cms. in diameter), must have belonged to a small spear point, the blade of which has not been found: perhaps it is still concealed in the iron corrosion.

The weapons make it likely that a man was buried in this grave.

2.2 *Horse trappings*

Two iron bits, four bronze discs and a bronze boss may be regarded as forming part of the horse trappings (section 2.4). The iron and bronze rings which are described below could also possibly be associated with horse fittings.

One bit is quite easily recognisable amongst the corroded ironwork (Figure 4.5). It is a three-link bit with sharply recurved cheek pieces (centre link circa 7-9 cms., side links circa 5 cms., cheek pieces 28 cms. long). Although an eye occurs on the inside of the cheek pieces, the exact method of attachment to the bit is unclear. The bit was made from round, forged bars of iron (1.3-1.5 cms. in diameter). The two cheek pieces and the mouthpiece of a second three link bit can be distinguished with difficulty. The components seem to have come apart in three sections.

Four round bronze phalerae were found in the grave (Figures 4.7-8, and 5). They are formed of three elements: a bronze disc with a separate tanged boss attached to the centre by an iron T-shaped sleeve. The disc is dished, 1 mm. thick, 10.7-11.2 cms. in diameter, and with a central hole 0.5-0.6 cms. across. Neither surface of the disc is decorated. The undecorated tanged boss is solid bronze, cast in a single piece with a somewhat pointed domed head with a slightly bevelled edge (diameter of head 2.7-3.1 cms., height 1.8 cms., total length 3.2 cms.). The tang (1.4 cms. long) passes through the central hole of the disc and the boss is secured to the disc by means of an iron T-shaped sleeve which fits over the end of the tang. The end of the tang was struck to flatten it and to prevent movement of the sleeve, while leaving a space of about 1 centimeter between the sleeve and the disc. The sleeve head is oval (2 cms.

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long). The T-shaped sleeves would have enabled the discs to be mounted on leather straps (or strap junctions), on either side of the bridles, for example (cf. Mariën 1958: 237). A single unattached knob of identical construction to those on the four discs, but lacking the iron sleeve was also found. Since all four phalerae still retain their central boss, this knob must have served some other function, unless it is the only remaining component of a fifth disc. On account of the uniform dimensions of all the bosses, they could well have been cast in the same mould.

Neither the iron horse-bits nor the bronze phalerae and single knob display the slightest trace of the effect of fire, heat or of deliberate damage. A single disc is slightly bent (Figure 4.7), but this need not have been deliberate.

The presence of the two horsebits clearly indicates that paired traction is concerned. This is supported by the phalerae, four in number which could have been mounted in pairs on the two bridles (also see Kossack 1954: 116-118). The same is true of the two rings with sunk bronze split-pins (section 2.4). Only the bronze knob lacks a companion, though in theory, this might still remain hidden in the lumps of iron corrosion. In all events, the principal elements of the bridles seem to have been deposited more or less complete in the grave: perhaps the leather bridles were deposited entirely.

2.3 *Vehicle fittings*

Recognizable vehicle fittings remaining are: four nave-hoops, the tyres, and three (fragmentary) U-shaped felloe-joins. All are made of iron[2].

There are four complete, circular bands of iron which can be identified as nave-hoops (Figure 4, 1-4) with the following dimensions:

number	*diameter (in cms.)*	*width (in cms.)*	*thickness (in cms.)*
1	14.6	—	—
2	14.6	1.7	0.4-0.5
3	14.9	1.5	0.5-0.6
4	15.2	1.7	—

Significantly, the four nave-hoops lay very close together. It is likely that the naves were intact when put in the grave. After the wooden nave had rotted away, the upper hoops slipped away over the lower ones, suggesting the following arrangement based on either dimensions or position:

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the dimensions	*number*	*size (in cms.)*	*position*
	1 + 2	14.6 + 14.6	upper + lower
	3 + 4	14.9 + 15.2	upper + lower
the position	3 + 2	14.9 + 14.6	upper + lower
	1 + 4	14.6 + 15.2	upper + lower

Since hoops number 1 and 2 lie relatively far apart and without any overlap, the second alternative is the more plausible, in which case each nave would have been fitted with a smaller and a larger hoop.

The wheel tyres are rather more difficult to describe and interpret. In contrast to the other equipment, these were certainly deliberately deformed and perhaps even broken since neither of the tyre hoops is still closed. The poor condition of the tyres is an additional difficulty in estimating the size or number of the tyres. The total remaining length of the iron tyre strips is about 502 cms., the width circa 2.4 cms., the thickness of metal 0.9-1.0 cms., thus appreciably thicker than the nave hoops. Using the formula pi × (2R) for the calculation of the circumference of the tyres, in association with the wheel diameter of 80-95 cms., usual for Middle Iron Age vehicles in the Hunsrück-Eifel (Haffner 1983: 246; Piggott 1983: 159-160, 211-213) we obtain the following lengths:

pi	×	*diameter (cms.)*	=	*circumference (cms.)*
3.14159		80		251.3
3.14159		85		267.0
3.14159		90		282.7
3.14159		95		298.5

In view of our total length of 502 cms., we presumably have the tyres of two wheels 80-90 cms. in diameter. The rims of the tyres are slightly thickened on the inside, probably to counter lateral sliding. Serving the same purpose and in one instance distinguishable are nails with rectangular shafts (length 6.4 cms., thickness 0.4 × 0.9 cms.) and flat, rectangular heads (2.3 × 1 cm.) which were struck through the tyres into the wooden felloe.

Only one of the three U-shaped felloe-joints is complete. It is 7.0 cms. long, and has a width of 2.5 cms. between the arms and 3.0 cms. at the closed end. Seen from the side, the felloe-joint widens from 3.6 to 6.5 cms. at the closed end. The iron plate is 0.1 cms. thick. The above fragments of the two other examples are both arms which have broken off. One is 7 cms. long and retains an iron nail (at least 2.2 × 0.3 cms.

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long) near to the open end, the other measures only 6.6 cms., but is also narrower. The measurements may be summarised:

number	*length (in cms.)*	*width (closed end; in cms.)*	*width (open end; in cms.)*
1	7.0	6.5	3.7
2	7.0	6.5	3.7
3	6.6	5.6	3.5 ?

The felloe-joints are intended to secure the individual segments of wooden spoked wheels. The number of such joints may vary per wheel from one (e.g. Djebjerg and Kärlich) to 16 (Salamis), and in part depends on the method of construction used for the spoked wheels and the number of felloe segments (Kossack 1971: 145, 156)[3]. In the case of the Nijmegen cart it may be assumed that there was a minimum of two per wheel: one is therefore lost.

The dimension of the felloe-joints indicate that the felloes were about 3.5 cms. wide and at least 7 cms. thick. Thus the tyres, which were only 2.4 cms. wide, did not cover the entire outside edge of the wheel.

2.4 *Miscellaneous*

Finally, mention must be made of some rings and nails. There are two relatively small (diameter 2.8 cms. external, 1.0 cms. internal) and thick (1.0 cms.) bronze rings (Figure 4.10-11 and 7). A channel 0.4-0.5 cms. wide is provided to take a narrow bronze split-pin and save it from lateral movement. The bronze wire still remains around one of the rings (length 2.7 cms., from ring to end circa 1.4 cms.; thickness 0.1-0.2 cms.; width 0.3 cms.). On each ring, one face is convex and undecorated while the other is facetted with grooves occurring on the outer side. The rings show no effect of either heat or fire. There are five iron rings circular in section and varying in size. One is extremely poorly preserved, another was possibly grooved for a split-pin or a narrow thong, comparable to the construction of the bronze rings. The dimensions may be summarised:

number	*diameter (external; in cms.)*	*diameter (internal; in cms.)*	*thickness (in cms.)*
1	*circa* 4.0	—	1.2 or more
2	4.8	3.4	—
3	4.8	3.0	—
4	5.6	2.8	—
5	6.4	3.6	—

A few other fragments of iron may come from nails.

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2.5 *The burial ritual and the deposition of the grave goods*

From the description given of the finds and the find circumstances, it will be apparent that the treatment of the corpse differed from that of the accompanying gifts of personal weapons, the horse harness and the cart. The corpse was cremated and only a small quantity of charred bone fragment was selected for burial: no part of the pyre, in whatever form, was incorporated in the grave. The cremated remains must therefore have been carefully picked out of the remains of the pyre expressly for purposes of burial. The weapons, the horse harness and certain of the cart components were evidently not placed on the pyre since none of these items show any signs of fire or heat. Furthermore, the principal components seem to have been retained as a virtually complete set. Only in the case of the nails and perhaps the iron harness rings a larger number might have been expected. Of all the equipment, only the tyres were deliberately bent and broken. This rather suggests that the wooden wheel was dismantled after removal of the iron tyre, possibly leaving only the nave with its metal fitments intact. The tyres could then have been flattened to fit into a relatively small grave pit. The other wooden sections of the cart such as axle, chassis and yoke pole were, in this case, probably not placed in the grave, which in turn might explain the scarcity of nails and the absence of lynch pins, terrets and pole end.

The procedure of deposition can be deduced from the position of the objects in the grave. In the centre lay the long spear, which was possibly placed in the grave first. The tyres lie over the spear and may therefore have been the next items to have been put in. Most of the tyre fragments occur in the southwestern half of the grave. In the northeastern corner, the nave-hoops lie in a heap with the horse harness: only a single phalera lies elsewhere, at the end of the spear butt. Since the nave-hoops lie in overlapping pairs it is probable that they were still in position on the wooden hub when put in the grave.

The remaining Burials

1. *Grave number 60/21*

Grave number 60/21 is one of the group of three to the East and appeared as a modest round pit of 30-45 cms. diameter. It contained a small quantity of cremated bone and a small intact pot (7 cms. high, greatest diameter 10.3 cms.) (Fig. 8). The vessel is burnished with a matt gloss, of dark grey to black ware, tempered with sand, grog and organic material. The shape is characterised by the carinated form of the transi-

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tions from the low foot to the body, body to shoulder, shoulder to low, everted rim.

2. *The other graves*

The three remaining burials (numbers 60/10, 60/20 and 60/22) are all circular pits varying in diameter between 50-60 cms., and containing only meagre remains of cremations. There is not the slightest trace of any grave gifts.

Dating and Parallels

The most obvious items available for the dating of grave number 60/9 are the bridles. The bits are of a distinctive type, several variants of which occur in Bohemia, but we also know them from South and Central Germany and the Champagne (Joffroy and Bretz-Mahler 1959: 17-18; Pauli 1983: 460-461; Soudská 1976: 631, 640, 645)[4]. They appear in the latest phase of the Hallstatt and the first phase of the La Tène period. A variant with recurved cheek-pieces is especially characteristic for the latter period (Dehn 1975, 1980: 329). Large phalerae mounted on the bridles are also a familiar feature of the period and occur in many different shapes (Mariën 1958: 72; Joffroy and Bretz-Mahler 1959: 17, 19; Kimmig 1970/1971: 166-167; Soudská 1976: 628, 631, 639, 645; Cahen-Delhaye 1981: 28-29). Exact parallels are difficult to locate, the more so since illustrations are frequently insufficiently detailed. The phalerae from the early La Tène burial at Chassemy perhaps approach the Nijmegen examples most closely (Joffroy and Bretz-Mahler 1959: 19).

The fact of a two wheeled vehicle burial in itself is also of dating significance. In the Hunsrück-Eifel, the first cart burials appear at the transition from the Hallstatt to the La Tène period, and subsequently this form of burial occurs with considerable frequency during the La Tène A phase (450-350 BC). The earlier vehicle burials of the late Hallstatt period in the Middle Rhine area are all of four wheeled Chassemy waggons (Haffner 1983: 241; also Piggott 1983: 158-159, 199-207). Cart burials are also well represented in the Ardennes, as can be concluded from recent excavations and they are mostly dated from between 450 and 400 BC (Cahen-Delhaye 1975, 1976, 1983: 254). This type of cart also occurs regularly in the La Tène graves of the Champagne (Joffroy and Bretz-Mahler 1959: 10-11, 25).

In general terms, the extremely large spear supports the evidence of the cart. This type of spear, with its pronounced midrib is familiar from

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the Hunsrück-Eifel and the Champagne where it is common in graves from the end of the Hallstatt to well into the middle of the La Tène period, i.e. from the 6th to the 4th century BC (Haffner 1976: 25-26, Beil. 1-8; Hatt and Roualet 1977, Pl. II, III, XIV; Hatt and Roualet 1981: Pl. XXXV).

Altogether, it would appear reasonably certain that the cart burial number 60/9 may be placed broadly in the Middle Iron Age, and more specifically dated to the second half of the 5th-first half of the 4th century BC. A similar date for the vessel from grave number 60/21 is quite acceptable. The carinated profile is one of the characteristic features of pottery in this period (Verwers 1972: 124, 134-136). The burial ritual in which the deceased is given a cart, horse gear and weapons is closely related to the contemporary burial practises of the Ardennes, the Hunsrück-Eifel and Northern France. A major dissimilarity, however, lies in the fact that while elsewhere the corpse is in general inhumed, at Nijmegen it was cremated. The ritual of cremation is obviously directly comparable to the mode of burial in the urnfields in the Netherlands.

The Feasibility of a Socio-Cultural Interpretation

1. *Theory and Method*

Some comment, theoretical and methodological in nature is unavoidable prior to any attempt to discuss the opportunities and limitations of a socio-cultural interpretation. In view of the region — northwestern Europe — and the period of time — the first millennium BC —, the complexity of the socio-political structure must be sought primarily in the 'tribal' or 'chiefdom' level in the sense of Service (1971: 99-169; 1975: 44-46), comparable to Fried's distinction in 'ranked' and 'hierarchical' societies. Despite the fact that anthropologists are concerned with still (in the recent past) living societies, the debate as to which criteria serve to place a particular society into one or other of the categories, what the characteristics of such societies are and how clear-cut or blurred the transition may be is not yet closed (Kloos 1976: 28, 92-94; Claessen 1974: 113-118; Claessen 1980). Pre- and protohistorians are concerned with no longer living cultures and consequently have to make do with much more defective evidence, a drawback which is to some slight extent compensated for by the much greater depth in time which is covered by their research. The translation of anthropological characteristics into pre- or protohistory therefore requires considerable caution (Claessen 1983: 9-10; Willems 1978: 82-84).

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A comparable, if not identical problem concerns the possibilities of relating the primary pre- or protohistoric evidence and its archaeological context to the context of the system: this problem is the object of the behavioural archaeology (Schiffer), middle-range theory (Binford) and interpretative theory (Clarke) (Binford 1983b: 411-422, note 2; Schiffer 1976). For Schiffer, the ''archaeological remains are a distorted reflection of a past behavioural system'' and the object is to retrieve the cultural and noncultural formation processes which determine the archaeological record (Schiffer 1976: 11, 13). Binford's middle-range theory is directed to the ''accurate means of identification and good instruments for measuring properties of past cultural systems'' (Binford 1983a: 49). Research which has considered the formulation of correlates which could link anthropological and archaeological criteria and which accounts for the (trans-)formation process is still comparatively new (Peebles and Kus 1977; O'Shea 1981; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978; also Chapman and Randsborg 1981: 6-19). Here, it must be queried in how far it is justified in the case of burial analysis ''to define or classify *societies* as ranked, stratified, etc. on the basis of the differential *status* of *individuals* within those societies'', as in the first place burial analysis provides information on the position of the individual (Renfrew 1982: 3-5; italics in original). Finally, we need to be aware that ''each material trait is produced in relation to a set of symbolic schemes and has a meaning dependent on its place within those schemes. So the same material thing may have different meanings in different contexts''. Thus Hodder warns against ''any restriction of analyses to one class of data, such as mortuary remains, ... because the relationship between patterns in life and patterns in death depends on the cultural context'' (Hodder 1982: 152-153).

The foregoing is directly relevant to the question of in how far and in which context — be it archaeological or sociological — cemeteries may provide evidence for the socio-political organisation of the society which made use of that cemetery. Ranking of the individual burials may be justified within the context of the Nijmegen cemetery, but to transpose the resulting conclusions onto the entire society of a much larger region demands greater caution, if only because it is just the Middle Iron Age which is so sparsely represented in cemeteries in the Netherlands.

2. *The analysis of the Nijmegen cemetery*

On the basis of the plausible assumption that the Middle Iron Age cemetery excavated in Nijmegen is (pretty well) complete in so far as the number of burials is concerned, it is possible to formulate the following

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observations and assumptions. It must, however, be borne in mind that no evidence is available as to the age and sex of the individuals from any analysis of the cremations remains. Moreover, in view of the extremely fragmentary condition of the cremations, much evidence of this nature is unlikely ever to be forth-coming.

The cemetery is remarkably small, comprising only five graves. Grave number 60/9 is conspicuous on account of the accompanying gifts of cart fitments, horse bridles and weapons, by its isolated position and by the larger grave pit; there is sufficient space for a tumulus of 10 m. diameter or more, although definite evidence for such a mound is lacking. The grave gifts proclaim the cremation to be male. If the distance between the graves is accepted as evidence of status or social distance from grave number 60/9, then grave number 60/10 takes the first place (distance 9.75 m.). Here, there would be room for a tumulus, the exact dimensions of which would be dependent on those of the hypothetical tumulus over number 60/9, but which could reach 5-8 m. in diameter. The group of three graves (nos. 60/20-22) follows in second place (at a distance of 22-25 m.). Within the group of three graves, number 60/21 stands out due to the presence of the small vessel. There is no room for individual tumuli, though a communal mound with a minimum diameter of 4 m. is a possibility. It is clear that within this small group, perhaps a nuclear family, grave number 60/9 occupies a dominant position. But which position could that be?

3. *Pater familias, 'Big-Man' or chief?*

Seen against the background of the comments on theory and method, the question of the position held in life by the deceased in grave number 60/9 is by no means simple to answer. Head of the suggested small family seems possible, but could he have been more? If the other comparable burials from the region between Meuse and Rhine are marshalled, the limits of the evidence specifically relevant to this burial are soon exceeded, for the comparison is intended to establish the position of this particular individual, not the structure of the socio-political organisation of the entire region.

Comparable conspicuous burials are those graves containing weaponry, horse harnesses or bronze vessels and dating to between the 7th and 5th century B.C.[5]. These graves may be distinguished not only by their grave gifts, but also by the size of the mound over them, as in Oss (52 m.) and Hegelsom (19 m.). Where sufficient evidence is available, as in Haps, Hegelsom, Lommel, Meerlo and Venlo, these graves are all fully integrated into the surrounding cemetery, or, to put it

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differently, they are not set apart from the other graves. It is furthermore remarkable that only one of these conspicuous graves is known from each cemetery. This fact might be explained by the supposition that there was no continuity from one generation to the other of the leading position concerned and that this position could be maintained for only a single generation. The suggested instability of the leading position would go some way to explaining why throughout the 7-5th century such important graves are scattered over the region, in a different place each time, suggesting a centre shifting from generation to generation. The Nijmegen cemetery differs from the other complexes in so far as it is very much smaller. In this respect, it is perhaps comparable to the Late Iron Age cemetery at Valkenburg-Vroenhof, which comprised 18 graves (Bloemers, Louwe Kooijmans and Sarfatij 1975: 40-41). The question is whether this difference with the earlier graves must be interpreted as a symptom of a more separate and elite position, or of a smaller size of the group buried, or of a more segmentary society. It is possible that the exposed position of the Nijmegen cemetery near the edge of the push morain could emphasise such separation in both geographical and spatial terms. Evidence in the sense of the archaeological correlates of the superordinate dimension of chiefdoms as formulated by Peebles and Kus for mortuary practices is lacking from all the important burials which have been mentioned previously. They write of this superordinate dimension as "a partial ordering which is based on symbols, energy expenditure and other variables of mortuary ritual, and which is *not* simultaneously ordered on the basis of age and sex". The available evidence does fit the 'superordinate dimension' where the variables listed *are* ordered on the basis of age and sex (Peebles and Kus 1977: 431). The conclusion must then be that these individuals did not possess the rank of 'chief'. The absence of a recognisable hierarchy within a settlement such as that of Haps (Verwers 1972) (and between the settlements mutually) might support this conclusion. If on the other hand, the criteria are applied which Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978: 84-85) have used to differentiate between paramount chief, vassal chief, subchief and minor chief, then these graves could, with due allowances, be placed on the level of the sub-chief or minor chief, depending on the composition of the grave goods. If, however, we move to a lower level, that of the tribe, then the position of 'Big-Man' could be brought into the discussion. But what about an egalitarian society which is in its development some way advanced towards a ranked society? Are the criteria, and especially the archaeological ones, used to identify the 'Big-Man' perhaps to a great extent identical to those for a sub- or minor chief at the bottom of a chiefdom hierarchy? This possibility must re-

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main open, all the more if we follow Claessen: "the big man is a very specific type of political leader. He is — as a type — an extreme on a continuum. His opposite is the *chief*, the head man" (Claessen 1974: 102).

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NOTES

1 The discovery of the cemetery was first reported in Bloemers 1975: 162. It was then provisionally and incorrectly dated to the 1st century BC.
2 A recent synopsis of construction and use of wheeled vehicles is given in Piggott 1983: 138-238.
3 For a typology and the (re-)construction of spoked wheels, see Hayen 1973: 149-55 and 170-3; Hayen 1980/1981: 140 and 144-146; Hayen, Ullemeyer, Tidow and Ruttner 1981: 24-25.
4 The Anloo hoard contains two bronze specimens of this type of bit as well as two bronze, openwork phalerae (De Laet and Glasbergen 1959: 172 and Pl. 44).
5 See also De Laet 1979: 494-500; Verwers 1976: 10-15. Oss: Modderman 1964. Meerlo: Verwers 1976. Hegelsom: Bloemers and Willems 1980/1981: 37-39; Willems 1983: 10. Lommel-Kattenbosch: De Laet and Mariën 1950: a.o. 324 Tombelle 22 (Fig. 8) and 348 (Fig. 38). Possibly also Venlo-Jammerdaalse Heide: Willems 1983: 227-229.

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FIGURES

Fig. 1. Nijmegen. Areas excavated by the State Service for Archaeological Investigations in the Netherlands (R.O.B.) during the years 1972-1981. Scale 1:20.000. 1. Eastern River Area (ERA-) Project; 2. Iron Age Cemetery (see Fig. 2); 3. Medieval Urbanisation Project.

Fig. 2. Nijmegen. Trench number 60 (partially) with the Iron Age burials nrs. 9, 10, 20, 21, 22. Scale 1:200.

Fig. 3. Nijmegen. Burial number 60/9. Iron spear (length 62 cms.).

Fig. 4. Nijmegen. Burial number 60/9. Lump with four iron nave-hoops. (nos. 1-4), two iron bits (nos. 5-6), two bronze phalerae (nos. 7-8), fragments of iron tyres (no. 9), two bronze (nos. 10-11) and two iron rings (nos. 12-13).

Fig. 5. Nijmegen. Burial number 60/9. Bronze phalera with boss and iron T-shaped sleeve.

Fig. 6. Nijmegen. Burial number 60/9. Fragments of deliberately deformed and broken iron tyres.

Fig. 7. Nijmegen. Burial number 60/9. Bronze ring with split-pin and iron ring.

Fig. 8. Nijmegen. Burial number 60/21. Handmade vessel. Scale 1:4.

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Fig. 1

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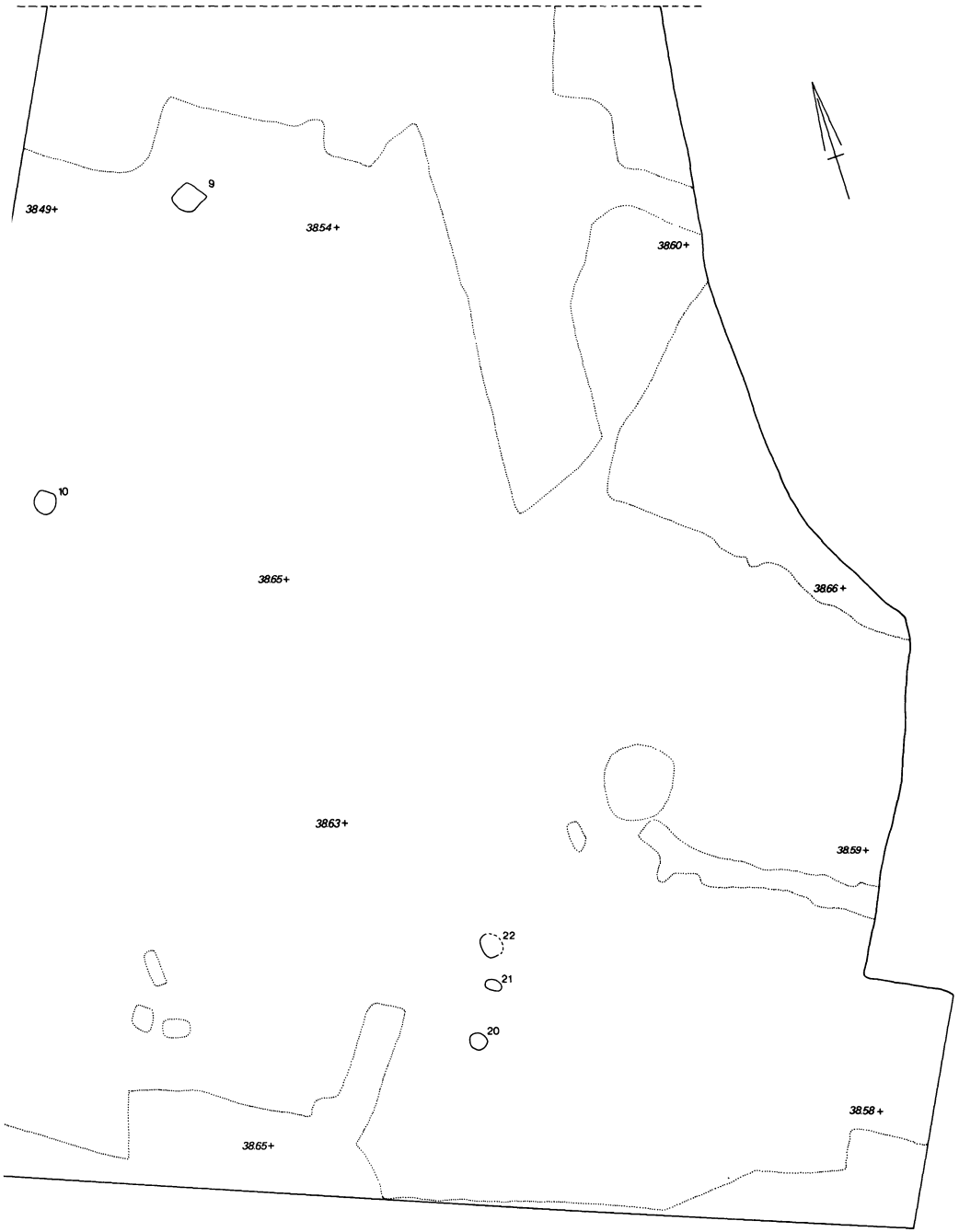

Fig. 2

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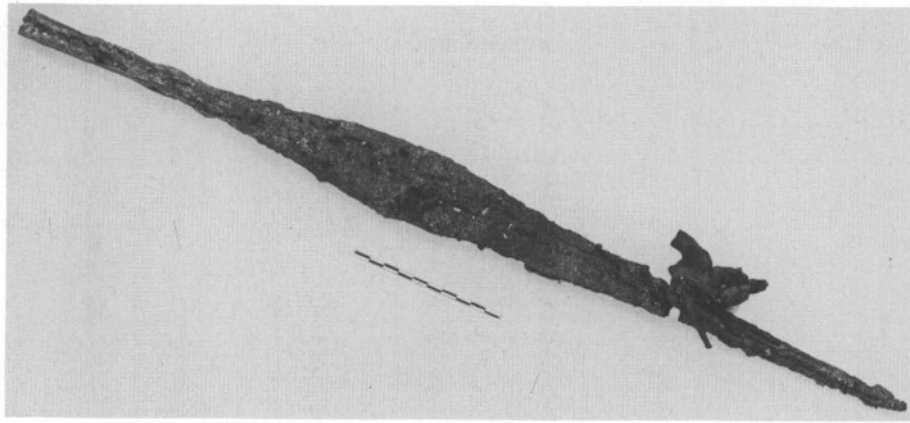

Fig. 3

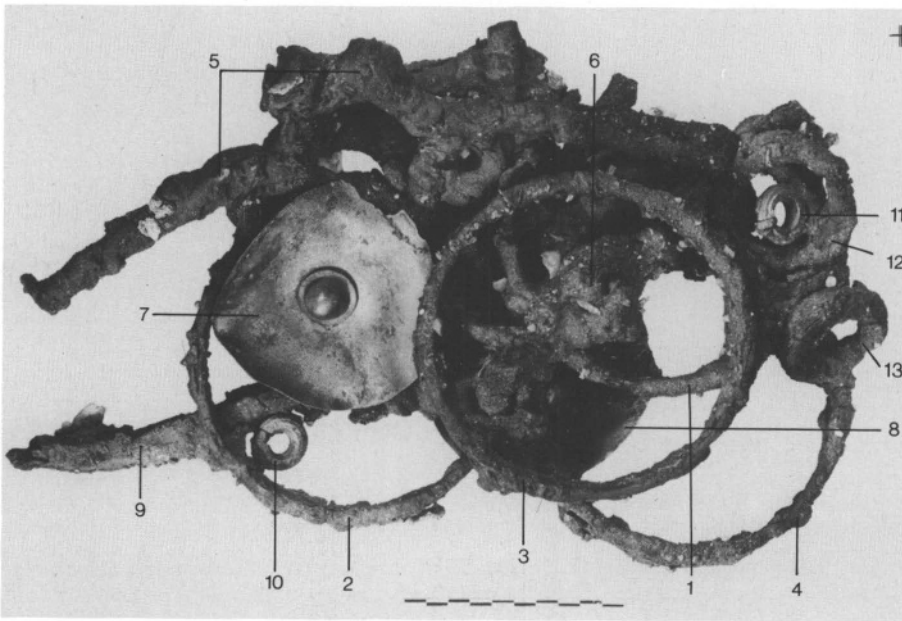

Fig. 4

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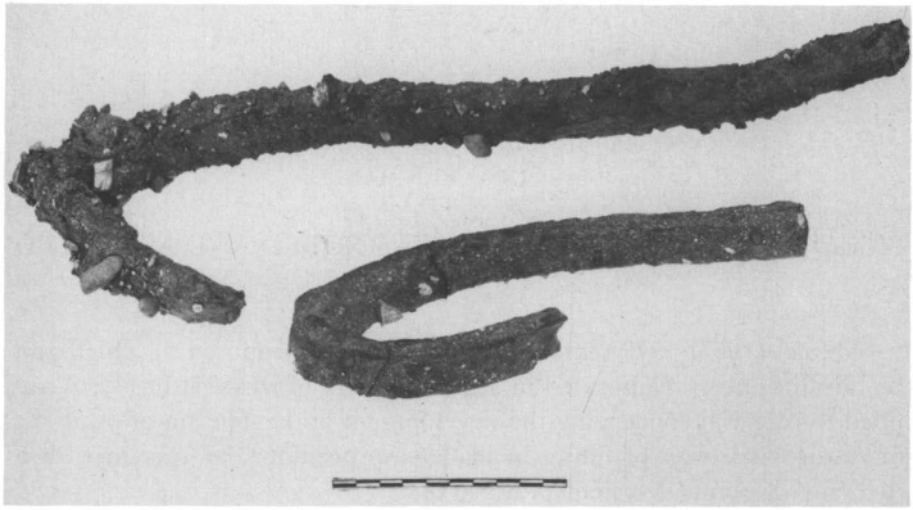

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

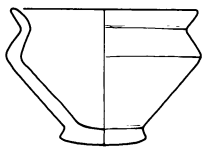

Fig. 8

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MARTIN A. VAN BAKEL

SAMOA: LEADERSHIP BETWEEN ASCRIBED AND ACHIEVED

Sahlins' (1963; 1972) concept of 'Big-Man' as opposed to 'chief' can be, and has been, elaborated in a great variety of ways. It has been applied to research concerning the development and evolution of positions of status, as a way of filling in leadership-positions, as specimen of a diversity of political systems, and so on.

My emphasis in this chapter will be more on this last aspect, an example of different political systems, depending on which level of analysis is taken. In Sahlins' (1963; 1972) opinion the 'Big-Man' is an entrepreneur, a manipulator, employing many initiatives to assemble and hold as many followers as possible, as a means of receiving and enlarging a position of leadership in his society. He is 'an equal among equals' trying to achieve a position of 'primus inter pares'. His position is described as an essentially unstable one. In opposition to him is placed the 'chief', who on a firm base of inheritance has received his position of leadership and his followers. Here no question of achievement or social mobility can be posed; it appears as a seemingly inflexible system.

For Sahlins the opposition 'Big-Man'/chief is more or less associated with the amount of surplus a society can produce. For him this is the reason why in Oceania 'Big-Man' systems are predominant in the relatively small Melanesian societies; whereas chiefly systems are to be found in the great and fertile archipelagoes of Polynesia.

For Friedman (1981) however the emergence of 'Big-Men' in Melanesia is not to be associated with the amount of surplus. In his opinion 'Big-Man' systems in Melanesia are a relatively recent phenomenon, having developed out of earlier chiefly systems. The emergence of 'Big-Men' has to be associated with trade, and especially with the growing impossibility of monopolising the flow of prestige-goods in the external trade. In Western Polynesia the old chiefly systems could stay alive as a consequence of the limited possibilities — or perhaps necessity? — for external trade. The little trade there was could be easily monopolised by the chiefs, and so a monopoly on the prestige-goods could be maintained. In cases where the external trade could not be monopolised — as was the case in most Melanesian societies — every enterprising person could gain access to these (socially valuable) prestige-goods traded, and in this way create influence and status; a

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'Big-Man' system evolved. For Friedman (1981) the chiefly systems seem to be the 'normal' case; the base from which both the systems in Melanesia (the 'Big-Man' system) and in Eastern Polynesia (the 'degenerated' chiefdom, and the quasi-state) evolved. By setting apart the case of the 'Big-Man' as a more or less specific development — and even a devolutionary one — of the chiefly systems, Friedman wants apparently to uphold the old evolutionary classification of band, tribe, chiefdom and state. However, it is just this classification which caused me some problems, especially in comprehending the situation in aboriginal Samoa. Neither for Friedman, nor for Sahlins this seemed to be the case; for them Samoa was a chiefdom. The reason for this was an overwhelming surplus, or a monopoly in the trade of prestige-goods. So the problem only seems to be mine (but see for instance Bargatzky 1984, and Claessen 1984, too).

The problem is that in my opinion 'Big-Man' systems and chiefly ones are not on the same level of analysis. In Samoa for instance I see a merging of both systems. It just depends upon which level of society one is focussing on. When looking at aboriginal Samoa from the formal — perhaps only the ideological — point of view, it surely can be stated that Samoa had a more or less chiefly system. From the informal — the praxis — point of view however, it has more aspects of a 'Big-Man' system. Perhaps it would be better to leave aside the foregoing dichotomous and classificatory interpretation of both systems and try to elaborate a more processual one.

In this latter meaning it can be argued that in every society both systems — the chiefly one with its ascribed statuses and so on, and the 'Big-Man' system with its stress upon achievement — are both working at the same time. Every single society has a peculiar balance between these two. Perhaps this is best understood with a reference to Johnson's (1982) seminal article about the difference between simultaneous and sequential hierarchies. His model of simultaneous hierarchies is largely congruent with the evolution of chiefdoms, and, in a more evolved phase, of state societies. Our own society, and most of the other societies on earth as a matter of fact, may serve as an example of this (but even in them sequential hierarchies play an important role, although at another level in society). The evolution of the alternative, the sequential hierarchies, has as yet hardly been researched. Johnson (1982) gives the first instigations for this. He studied the development of sequential hierarchies among hunter/gatherers. He poses that organisations, and human societies too can be considered as such, all exhibit certain bounds. This is to say that organisations which grow beyond a certain size have to change, if they have to survive as organisations. According to Johnson

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the first boundary is at a group size of six persons. Within groups of more than six persons the amount of information among the members will be so large that the group is under 'scalar stress', on account of which the functioning of the group as an entity is endangered. Johnson gives three possibilities for solving the problem of 'scalar stress':

a. the division of the group (organisation) into several independent organisations, each with less than six members. The original organisation doesn't have to be changed; it is only duplicated by independent organisations at the same level.
b. the development of a management mechanism, a hierarchy of levels of decision, for the regulation of the information within the organisation. Johnson calls this a simultaneous hierarchy. For instance a foreman over a shift of labourers, a departmental chief above a group of foremen, managers as heads of groups of department chiefs, above these managers a division-director, and so on right to a single managing-director. The crucial point in simultaneous hierarchies is that in the end all decisions come right from the top and filter through all levels down to the bottom. This hierarchy has a permanent character.
c. an alternative for this simultaneous hierarchy is the development of a sequential hierarchy. The elaboration of this concept is a bit difficult, as a sequential hierarchy is strongly situational, and at any moment it only exists in part. The basic idea behind this system is that as the size of the organisation grows, the operating units within the organisation grow bigger too. Johnson illustrates this with an example of the !Kung Bushmen social organisation. Within a !Kung nuclear family wandering through its territory, every adult member is a single operating unit within this group. In rainy season camps, where the !Kung assemble with 15 or more adults, the operating (= decision-making) units are not every single adult any more, but the nuclear families (represented each by its family-head in the assembly) who operate as the basic units. But when the !Kung assemble in the dry season camps with forty and more adults, the basic decision-making units aren't the nuclear families any more, but their tasks and functions are taken over by the extended families. At even bigger gatherings, of 125 adults and more, the clans emerge as the operating units. At this same moment Johnson sees the emergence of 'Big-Men' with hierarchically differentiated integrating and controlling functions as examples of emerging simultaneous hierarchies. Leadership in 'Big-Man' societies, however, is characteristically a temporary affair, and is least of all a well-founded simultaneous hierarchy.

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The question of splitting up groups into several smaller independent organisations, or not, is strongly situation-prone. The same is true about the choice of a society to put more emphasis on the development of a sequential hierarchy than on the development of a simultaneous hierarchy. Groups don't split up when they cannot (i.e. Carneiro 1970: circumscription), or when they need not to. In the same way groups don't develop another organisational structure when they cannot, or when they don't need to. This last thing, the absence of necessity to develop (in spite of growing size) another organisational structure, hasn't received much attention until now. Samoa seems to me a good starting-point for this.

In spite of, most likely, a population number of about 40.000 people in 1830, the population density in Samoa was low; about 12 persons per km^2. Good cultivatable soil abounded; even in 1956 with 100.000 inhabitants (McArthur 1968: 141) only one fifth of the soil was cultivated, whereas about three fifths of the soil are cultivatable with traditional methods (Pirie 1972: 213). The people are not concentrated in villages, but in a sort of homestead-pattern scattered over their landholdings. With very little effort, as they are predominantly horticulturalists, not only the basic needs of the population are fulfilled, but a fairly reasonable amount of surplus is created as well. Calamities in production seem to be quite rare; famine is almost unknown, or regionally very circumscribed. That this relative affluence is more or less mirrored in the social-political build-up of this society is not more than to be expected.

Samoa is a very loosely structured society in which every 'village' (= a cluster of homesteads) functions as a fairly autonomous society with the village-council (*fono*) as its government. Members of this village-council are the 'titled' heads (*matai*) of each household in the village. All problems regarding the village as a whole are settled in this village-*fono*. Unanimity is the rule in this council. Problems regarding a single household are not the competence of this *fono* — unless it affects the village as a whole — and are settled by its *matai* in a household-gathering (Williamson 1924^{III}: 181). Questions beyond the village-level seldom arise, simply on account of the autonomy of the villages and the relative abundance of cultivatable soil. Only in the case when problems beyond the village-level arise, a higher decision-level is called into existence. Then a sub-districts-*fono*, or a districts-*fono* is called together. In this *fono* representatives of each village are assembled. These representatives are the holders of the higher ranking titles in each village. In this council, too, unanimity is required. Mainly wars are the province of this council. Theoretically as well as ideologically, even higher levels of decision above the (sub)-district are acknowledged; these are the island-*fono* and

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the *fono* of all Samoa (except Manu'a). It is significant, however, that in our sources never an indication occurs that this last *fono* has ever assembled. This seems a clear indication that never in memorable times problems have arisen which were of concern to all Samoa. This seems a clear example of a sequential hierarchy in the political sphere. The primary decision-level here is at the bottom, and remains there, even when higher levels come to be involved. Moreover, higher decision-levels are called into existence only when, and only as far as, necessary.

Not only is this same loose structure characteristic for the political sphere, but also for the system of leadership in Samoa. Leadership in Samoa is thought of as connected with the holding of a honorific title in a strict and fixed hierarchy of titles. In essence there are two separate, but interconnected, hierarchically structured series of titles: the chiefly titles (*alii*) and the talking-chief (*tulafale*) titles. Each chief (*alii*) is bound to have a talking chief (*tulafale*) who can act as his spokesman in the *fono*. As there are higher and lower titles, both for *alii* and *tulafale*, and as those titles are thought of as hereditary in certain families, a 'strict' hierarchy of families is the consequence. However, there is one minor problem in this stratification of Samoan society. In spite of this seemingly strict hierarchy and its apparently fixed character, the praxis is almost the contrary. Partly on account of the low (population) pressure on the soil, a leader has to take great pains to gather and to keep his followers (Turner 1884: 175-177; Williamson 1924[III]: 101-103; Schultz-Ewerth 1926: 59; Bargatzky 1978: 240; Tiffany 1975: 269-281). This is even strengthened by the variety of options a Samoan has to settle in one village or another. On account of the ambilineal kinship system every Samoan can, and in fact does, claim membership of several families. Almost the sole criterion to be recognized as a family-member is participation in some of the family-duties (sometimes merely the gift of some money or other token of a feeling of responsibility for upholding family-honour). In this way claims to several titles — even in different families — can be laid down. So this hierarchically structured system is more of an open system, not only open for every enterprising person, but open to manipulation as well. The most striking examples of the openness of the system seem to me the statements of Keesing (1934: 245) and Holmes (1974: 95) that almost every man in the age of 35 to 40 is holder of some — *alii* or *tulafale* — title. Several of them are even holders of several titles at the same time. That the system to a high extent is open to manipulation too, may be clear not only from the fact that every Samoan can claim membership — and in this way a title — in several families, but from the high expenses connected with obtaining a title, especially the higher ones, as well. A claimant to a title not only needs the consent

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of the family in which the title is hereditary, but the *fonos* in which the title-holder can claim the — to the title attached — place within the *fono*, have to consent too (Krämer 1901: 11). This place will only be granted after a good speech and some gift to the members of that *fono* (Williamson 1924[III]: 179). Neither the *fonos*, nor the electoral colleges of *tulafale* (only for the highest titles like *Tui Manu'a*, *Malietoa*, *Tui A'ana* and *Tui Atua*) were averse to gifts or bribery (see for instance the reasons of the *tulafale* for arranging as many marriages of the *alii* as possible; Turner 1884: 176).

Skilful entrepreneurs and manipulators may in this way get every opportunity to reach the top (cf. Bargatzky 1984: 5). Real barriers to carry off high, and even the highest, titles don't seem to exist. However, the price is high; but the price as well as the praise is high, too. Although the real power of a *matai*, being an *alii* or a *tulafale*, is not so impressive or secure — they can be deposed (Turner 1884: 177; Williamson 1924[III]: 10, 46, 182, 207; Schultz-Ewerth 1926: 60) — the status and prestige of a title-holder in society is most prominent.

In short, in Samoa we perceive a very peculiar mixture of simultaneous and sequential hierarchies. The simultaneous hierarchies figure predominantly on the formal and ideological levels, while the sequential hierarchies figure more in the sphere of praxis. Yet, however interesting this conclusion may seem, an even more important question appears to be now: Why has this 'Big-Man' type of leadership emerged on Samoa, associated with a political structure of the sequential hierarchy-type, whereas a leadershipsystem with chiefs and a simultaneous hierarchy in the political structure was to be expected (and is even found in the ideology)? Both Sahlins (1963; 1972) — on account of a low surplus-production — and Johnson (1982) — on account of the evolutionary potential — expect a 'Big-Man' system of leadership as associated with a sequential hierarchy to exist only in small-scale societies of at the utmost several thousand people. More extensive societies — organisations — seem to be more inclined to a simultaneous hierarchy of which the chiefdom-level of leadership is one type.

With this reasoning Samoa doesn't really fit in, or only fits in when we just look from the formal or ideological point of view above. This particular case, in my opinion, has been brought about by a very specific set of circumstances. As can be deduced from the foregoing discussion the most important seem to be:

— a very rich and differentiated ecosystem, with a great variety of ecological zones in a very limited area; together with only limited ecological differentiation between the islands or parts of them.

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— rarity of large-scale ecological disasters (such as a hurricane in Manu'a 1915, on account of which the whole population had to be evacuated (McArthur 1968: 144)).
— a high population-level combined with a low population-density in a rich environment.
— an ambilinear kinship system.
— the population widely scattered over the region.
— an abundance of unused cultivatable soil.

Possibly the last two factors are more or less consequences of the foregoing ones. However, the combination of a relatively low population-density and a very rich and stable natural environment is a rather unique one. The resulting social and political structure of Samoa as a consequence can be rather unique too. As I have already discussed elsewhere (Van Bakel 1984) why population-density in Samoa could be so low, I will leave it aside for this moment. For now I just want to show why and how this peculiar situation in Samoa in the social and political sphere could be brought about. If we take the low population-density and the rich environment for granted, we can reason as follows.

In spite of the total population-level, (population)pressure on the soil is very low. There is always an abundance of comparable, or even better, soil. Moreover, wherever one is living at the moment, or should want to live, in the archipelago almost everywhere there is the possibility to found new self-supporting communities with almost all of the ecological zones, from lagoon and sea to virgin forests and high mountains, within easy reach. Ecologically there will be no necessity to cluster communities, or even for specialisation among them. The same seems true from the social and political point of view. External threat, as well as to a lesser extent external trade, are virtually absent. Even internal threat, in spite of the frequent wars according to the literature, seem to have been minimal only (Krämer 1901: 10). Contact between villages was relatively easy, especially by way of the lagoon, and frequent (see for instance the institution of the '*Malaga*': the extensive ceremonial visits of large parts of one village to another) (Holmes 1974: 28), but not obligatory for survival (apart from the social point of view). Ideologically too, I can't find any necessity to cluster or to specialise. That, as a consequence, the system of leadership, as well as the political structure, and especially the power of the leaders only has developed very weakly is no more than reasonably can be expected. Perhaps the only problem in such a large society like Samoa was to keep those entrepreneurial people in check. Possibly this is the reason why that elaborate system of titles emerged. Ambitious people were given every opportunity to show their capacities

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— to the benefit of society — in collecting, more or higher, titles and they were awarded the corresponding amount of status and prestige (cf. Mead 1969: 21). For this matter sometimes even new titles were created, or existing ones divided up between several claimants (Williamson 1924[III]: 163; Gilson 1970: 38; Keesing and Keesing 1956: 43; Bargatzky 1978: 286; Schultz 1911: 44).

From this point of view 'Big-Man' and chiefly systems are not to be seen as opposites to each other. They are more or less alternatives which are both working in every society. Which of these systems gets more stress in a specific society (and in which level of society) will be dependent on specific circumstances. 'Big-Man' systems seem to be more pronounced when, in spite of whatever the total population-level may be, there is a situation of a relative shortage of people, or, in other words, an abundance of good soil. Whereas chiefly systems seem to be more accentuated in the case of a circumscribed — in whatever way — amount of (cultivatable) soil in comparison to the total population. A good illustration of this last situation seems to me the chiefly system in Mangareva (Buck 1938; Laval 1938) with no more than 2000 to 4000 inhabitants on 28 km², of which only about 8 km² are cultivatable, meaning an overall density of the population of 71 to 143 persons per km², or even 250 to 500 persons per cultivatable km², in aboriginal times.

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RENÉE HAGESTEIJN

TRADING PLACES: POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN EARLY STATES

Introduction

The nature of the sources often influences the image of a society, especially in the case of a historical society. A more critical look at the backgrounds of the sources may lead to a different image of one or more elements in these societies, as will be demonstrated with the help of Continental Southeast Asian historical data.

Stereotype

Historical Southeast Asia (pre AD 1500) is traditionally viewed as a region ruled by powerful sacral kings, symbolising politics, who from their thrones exclusively decide about the lives of the people living in the villages surrounding their impressive 'theocratic' capitals like Angkor and Pagan, thereby acting in a fixed framework according to the rules of the Universe, in association with the Buddha, the Hindu deities and the local spirits. Because of this association they are considered the ultimate authority in their societies. In this role they can be found in numerous myths, legends, histories, but also in scientific analyses.

In Buddhist terms these 'kings' are *dharmaraja*: defenders of the *Dharma* (the Buddhist Law), and *bodhisattva*, in a decisive stage to Salvation in the Nirvana. In Buddhist philosophy it is the major predestination of the kings to bring order in human chaos. In order to do so they have all kinds of privileges. For instance in Hindu terminology they are *devaraja*, divine kings, or intermediaries between humans and gods, who will become gods after their deaths (cf. Tambiah 1976). Based on these titles Southeast Asian early rulers are presumed to have ascribed status and authority.

Also the historical political organisations — the early Southeast Asian states — which these rulers are part of, are traditionally presented as pyramidical systems with large territories, with the rulers in the capital, assisted by various political functionaries with declining ranks, supplied by means of redistribution in labour (often slavery) and agricultural surplus, characterised by fixed mutual relations and remuneration, perpetuated through dynastic succession.

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This traditional picture has grown slowly but persistently, based on various sources. It is initially based on contemporary inscriptions, that were often composed by the political leaders — the 'kings' — themselves in close association with religious specialists. These religious specialists — Indian monks or Brahmans — added traditional Indian political theory to the messages in the inscriptions, to suggest an image of equilibrity and control that the political leaders obviously wanted to create. In a way we are dealing with a bias in the sources, which in the course of time has led to myth formation on the content of Southeast Asian political leadership: fixed, ascribed political leadership based on supernatural connections. This image has been strenghtened in later dynastic annals (in which information on the inscriptions has been mixed with oral tradition and more desire for equilibrium, and therefore has been transformed into the ideal typical image of the early Southeast Asian political system). This transformed image has been picked up by early twentieth century European historians who have added other biases to it: of European Christian kingship and of centralised Western bureaucracy (resulting in comparisons of Southeast Asian political functionaries with ministers, comptrollers, tax collectors, etc.). Information from the indigenous sources has been molded according to the 'own' centralised frame of reference. Nowadays exceptions to this rule become available (Aung Thwin 1979, 1981; Mabbett 1968; Wolters 1979, 1982), but the other, more realistic, representation of early Southeast Asia is not yet complete.

The reason why this centralised image, as described above, does not correspond with reality is that it gives a *status quo*, while reality is more dynamic. Up till now mainly theoretical aspects of early Southeast Asian political leadership have been studied in literature (cf. Gokhale 1966; Tambiah 1976). When the more pragmatic aspects are emphasised, another picture presents itself.

Dynamics

When we take a closer look at the contents of the indigenous sources from a comparative diachronic point of view we see that reality must have been less fixed than is assumed. Although — judging from the enormous quantity of material remains they have left in the form of city plans and religious buildings — they obviously must have been seen as sacral benevolent lords by their adherents, the power of the rulers was less stable, even often contested. Amongst others this can be observed from the frequent succession disputes in Southeast Asian history. Instead of a single unified large scale political formation (as it had been suggested

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from the sources) continental Southeast Asian political structures consisted of a number of regional centres of which the rulers contested each other for supra-regional power (see map 1). This resulted in a situation in which some families occasionally were able to gain control over the other regional centres for more than one generation. This observation has consequences for the contents of political leadership. In the traditional native sources the 'minor' political leaders were presented as 'political functionaries' subordinated to the ruler. In reality, however, authority was fluctuating, as were the centres themselves. Centralised, stable kingship as presented in the traditional native sources was only an artificial fixation of a constantly changing situation. Changing patron-client relations instead of fixed bureaucratic hierarchies were dominant. We are confronted with a dynamic picture. In reality personal achievements and distribution of wealth were as important as the traditionally defined ascribed authority as described in the traditional sources. Besides, it appears that when a leader had spent his wealth, his power was over and a new leader would rise and start the whole process of distributing possessions to political aides again. Thus apart from the image of formal ascribed kingship we are also confronted with other rulers on regional and local level, who are often a threat to the fragile authority of the official sacral 'king'.

In this short article some remarks will be made on the backgrounds of these dynamics, especially with respect to the legitimacy problems of the rulers that are inherent to it. It will appear that early Southeast Asian political leadership, although commonly referred to as kingship, has also resemblances with anthropological descriptions of petty chieftainship, or even the 'Big-Man'.

Formal Leadership

Apart form the territorial lay-out (map 1), a major problem in early Southeast Asian politics is related to its Indian bias. Formal leadership in Southeast Asian kingship is defined rather broadly; in fact too broadly to be legitimative in an effective way. Formal Southeast Asian historical political legitimation has been 'borrowed' or 'inherited' by Southeast Asian political leaders from India. Along with trade and agricultural techniques Buddhist monks and Hindu Brahmans provided local Southeast Asian rulers with legitimizing concepts like *devaraja*, *dharmaraja*, *cakravartin*, *bodhisattva* and the like. These rulers were eager to use these concepts to illustrate and visualise internal processes of social stratification and political inequality that had preceded the contacts with India. However, relatively speaking — from a macro point of view —

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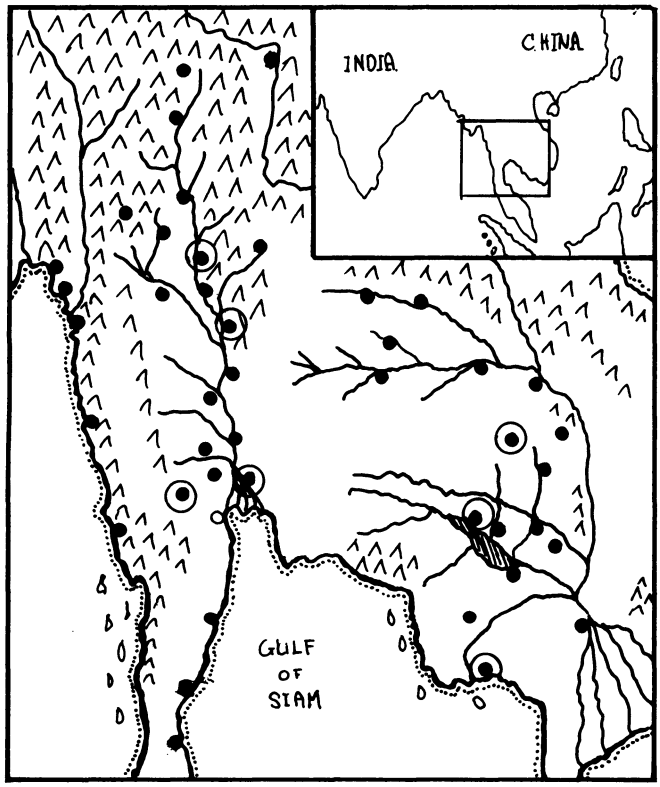
too many local political leaders had access to these titles, with a devaluation of their contents as a result (see map 1). In the sources it is assumed that only one leader claimed these titles. In actuality many regional leaders did so.



Map 1. The major political centres in early Continental Southeast Asia.

Insufficiently taken into consideration is the fact that for instance in the Cambodian region from the pre-Angkor era onwards the use of the concept *devaraja* as suffix to the names of political leaders is not reserved exclusively for 'kings', i.e. supra-regional leaders (cf. Sahai 1970: 19). Political 'functionaries' and Brahmans also had the right to use this suffix.

But there are also examples, for instance in the later Angkor period, of political rulers simultaneously using the suffix *devaraja*. The two kings

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Harsavarman I and Isanavarman II claimed to be *devaraja* at the same time. Briggs (1951: 116) is not surprised because the *kamrateng jagat ta raja* is a ritual that can transform "each linga (= phallic image to represent the *devaraja*) into a god-king" (cf. Briggs 1951: 116; Stern 1934: 611-616). The *devaraja* concept in a sense is inadequate to distinguish the supra-regional overlord (the 'king') from other political leaders. The regional political leaders are also referred to as 'kings'.

The Buddhist concept of *kammaraja* that is found to play a role in Burma (Aung Thwin 1981: 44, 56) is also politically ambiguous. It is derived from the Buddhist notion of *karma* (= merit). In short, association with this concept implies that a person can become 'king' because of a well-behaved previous life. However, in retrospect it appears that in practice one could also become 'king' after a successful deed in the present life. A successful usurper was considered to have good *karma*, and was thus authorised to overrule the reigning 'king', whose *karma* apparently had faded.

Also the dynastic continuity in early Southeast Asian states, that is suggested by the contemporary inscriptions, is somewhat misleading. Many political leaders invented impressive genealogies to trace descent from illustrious predecessors. Often these genealogical lines are more fantasy than reality.

If formal political legitimation in early Southeast Asia — for the larger part borrowed form India — is not discriminative enough, because too many people had access to it, we might ask what determined the actual power relations. What can be found underneath the formal cover?

Personal Skills and Achievements

Heredity is often considered as one of the characteristics of kingship. However, it appears that the early Southeast Asian rulers initially were not hereditarily selected (Wolters 1979: 429). They promoted themselves by performing extraordinary accomplishments or they were *chosen*. In the long run the pool from which they could be chosen became smaller, and eventually Southeast Asian kingship became more or less hereditary, although initially almost anybody could become 'king'.

The possible contenders for the throne of early Thai states could be: religious persons, elders, *setthi* ('well-to-do laymen'), *khahabodi* ('masters of the house') and *phumibun* ('one who has merit') (Charnvit Kasetsiri 1976: 44-45).

Kingship in Funan (Hall 1982: 85; Wolters 1979, 1982) was also the result of personal achievements, not because one could claim to be a descendant of an earlier overlord. This picture fits with various other

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descriptions that power in Southeast Asia depended on control of manpower (cf. Akin Rabidhadana 1969). Control of manpower in societies without mass communication depended on personal skills and achievements.

During the first year of the reign of Jayarvarman II of Angkor only military successes legitimised his power, and gave him the support of regionally ruling families (cf. Wolters 1973: 26).

Griswold and Prasert Na Nagara (1977: 112) point to the fact that in the inscription of Vat Jvan Hman (1581 AD) it is suggested that the city of Chiengmai was built by the ruler himself with the aid of a monk and another ruler (Rama Gamben of Sukothai) after having received a good omen. And of ruler Aniruddha of Pagan an inscription was found with the following text (Guillon 1977: 88).

> "This pagoda was built by the great king Aniruddha the Saint with his own hands".

The role of the political leader as protector is also important in this respect. He gave protection in exchange for agricultural surplusses. Without protection the peasants could be captured by another political leader. Without food and other basics the political leader was vulnerable. He also had to keep an eye on the peasants in his vincinity because they might flee to other overlords (Akin Rabidhadana 1969). Patron-client relations and their protective aspects were and remained important. Control of manpower was essential in early Southeast Asia. Population was scarce. The political leader who was able to attract the largest number of people to his settlement was the leader. However, not for long because other leaders were also eager to increase their manpower, either peacefully or non-peacefully.

The mechanical application of Buddhist terms like *dharmaraja* and Hinduist concepts like *devaraja* in the inscriptions, presupposing ascribed and hereditary status because genealogical links with predecessors are made, conceal the fact that before obtaining these titles hard labour had to be performed in order to become the leader. And many hardships had to be endured to remain the leader, because there was much competition among regional lords who wanted to overrule the others.

Warfare

The importance of warfare is proverbial in early Southeast Asian history. The formation of alliances between stronger and weaker units, their defence and attack strategies, the changes in the alliances are major topics in the inscriptions. Analyses of these hostilities have been confined

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to the resemblances of their organisations to the Indian army and administration in the *Kautilya Arthasastras* (cf. Kangle 1983), to religious explanations ('Holy wars'), to practical motives, economic factors and strategic factors.

Hardly any attention has been paid to the legitimative aspect of this warfare. Apart from practical reasons like the supply of means to distribute to followers: new land, slaves, booty, relics, etc., warfare increased the legitimacy of a leader, because his followers were more attached to him. In case of lost wars, followers would leave in search for a more successful leader. From the sources it also appears that weak 'kings' did not fight, and often perished because of being overruled by other more successful leaders.

But warfare is also important in another respect: material means taken from the defeated adversary: manpower, land, and valuables were crucial as gifts to political followers. Formally early Southeast Asian states had centralised redistribution systems, but these hardly functioned properly, because the larger part of the superplus remained on the place of production and was consumed by regional and local leaders. One of the most important sources of income for a Southeast Asian supra-regional leader, apart from trade, was booty obtained from warfare.

Distribution

In the inchoate Southeast Asian early states the distribution of gifts by the kings is assumed to be symbolical, surrounded by a sacral atmosphere, and on the surface more beneficiary for the recipient than for the donor. But after a closer look it appears that this institution was not symbolic at all. The giving of valuables was a matter of survival for the political leader himself. Kulke (1982) described this for early Javanese rulers, the *raja*'s. They were 'new' and had to fight for their legitimation among equals. The equals had as much legitimation and power as the *raja*. The *raja* tried to prove himself by giving enormous feasts, in order to show his superiority. It was also important to prevent other leaders from increasing material wealth, so that they might gain legitimacy. As soon as his means were exhausted, and this display of power could not be continued any more, the ruler was finished and a new one appeared on the scene. Brand (1975) notices for Ayudhya Thailand that the donations of rulers to Buddhist monasteries were overdone. He explains this with Mauss' theory (1925): giving means showing that one is more than the receiver (Brand 1975: 131). According to Wolters (1979: 436-437; cf. Kirsch 1973) in pre-Angkor days gift-giving clarified or illuminated the inequality of the souls: "the successful feaster was actually

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demonstrating his innate virtue, showing his internal potency and his control over super-natural forces''.

Despite the fact that redistribution gained a more formal character to keep the state organisation going, a part of the material means remained reserved in order to be able to fight succession disputes and legitimation problems. For the early king reciprocity remained important for his legitimacy. Only when the state organisation in which he had to function got a more distinct form, and his grip on power became stronger, his presents became more symbolical and economically less valuable. Titles were given instead of costly feasts, which can be observed in fifteenth century Thailand, when king Trailok (1448-1488) introduced the institution of titles of honour for his functionaries (Akin Rabidhadana 1969). However, this did not prevent that in less stable times rulers had to return to more tangible rewards to keep their functionaries satisfied and loyal.

In literature on Southeast Asia merit-making is foremost seen as a religious affair (Aung Thwin 1979: 677): it is seen as buying a better place in the cycle of rebirth. However, one might argue that there is more than only religion in these gifts (cf. Hagesteijn 1983).

Buddhism and Hinduism provided legitimacy only to those with material wealth, because only the rich and wealthy are capable of founding monasteries and other religious buildings, and of the maintenance of *bhiksus* (monks). In historical times these people obviously obtained political power from these religious donations. This must also have been the reason for the careful registration of the donations.

It can also be observed that when material means were worn out, power was fading as well. That is why it was important to keep up a steady stream of material means either by warfare or by donations from political functionaries in the name of the 'king'. Profits from trade were also an important part of the resources of the leaders. Those who succeeded in obtaining and keeping trade monopolies were able to keep up political leadership longer than those who were dependent on other sources of income (Vinal Smith 1980; Sternstein 1965: 106).

All sources of income were dependent on the legitimacy of the 'king'. However, the legitimacy of the ruler was also dependent on the supply of material means, presenting us with a classical example of a vicious circle. This must be one of the reasons why Southeast Asian early states — contrary to their images in the written sources — have been unstable throughout the larger part of their history, till colonisation took over.

However, as those rulers who were on the peak of their fragile power, with the Indian example as inspiration, in the inscriptions and the annals created a centralised and stable image of their situation (as a 'snapshot'

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of a larger, more fluctuating and dynamic process of Southeast Asian political leadership) it is not difficult to envisage how a bias developed.

Political Leadership and Typology

Despite the formal fixed framework of kingship, the authority of the early Southeast Asian rulers for a considerable part depended on achievement, distribution of material means and patron-client relations. It is also evident that from a diachronic perspective there was little continuity in early Southeast Asian political leadership, contrary to the ideal-typical descriptions in the sources (from a synchronic perspective). For instance Angkor, a polity that held power in Cambodia from the ninth till the fourteenth century AD had more than six different capitals, four usurpations, and eleven other non-lineal successions (out of 27). And even when succession was from father to son, this was no guarantee for a peaceful event, because due to the institutionalization of the serail a ruler had many sons, who had their own retenue, their own sources of income, and who contested each other fiercely, because of a lack of strict succession rules. Comparing the successive rulers in early continental Southeast Asia, it appears that every one of them had to build up his political relations and stay alert to keep these relations. Distributions of gifts obtained from warfare and trade were major ingredients in this alertness. When the means had worn out, other leaders who had accumulated 'merit' (*karma*) through material riches might stand up and take over political authority. In fact Southeast Asian history shows us a picture of changing alliances between people with more or less material means and accompanying power. The exchange of gifts changed the power balance almost constantly. Bureaucratic apparatuses for the larger part were Indianised fiction; a ruler was dependent on patron-client relations with "lesser" political leaders. When his legitimacy was high (achievements in war, etc.) all went well. Then the ruler had enough authority to attach the other political leaders to him and force them to make religious donations in his name. However, when the legitimacy of the ruler was low, he had to invest in his legitimacy and make donations — to religious as well as to political leaders — himself. In that case, one of the other (regional, thus formally minor) rulers might become more powerful than the supreme ruler, and take over authority (cf. Aung Thwin 1979).

In a sense, the other (lesser/minor) political leaders (see Figure 1) were a necessity as well as a threat to the power of the ruler. At their regional home base their power depended on small scale local distribution systems. Based on manipulation of supernatural forces, an ancestor cult

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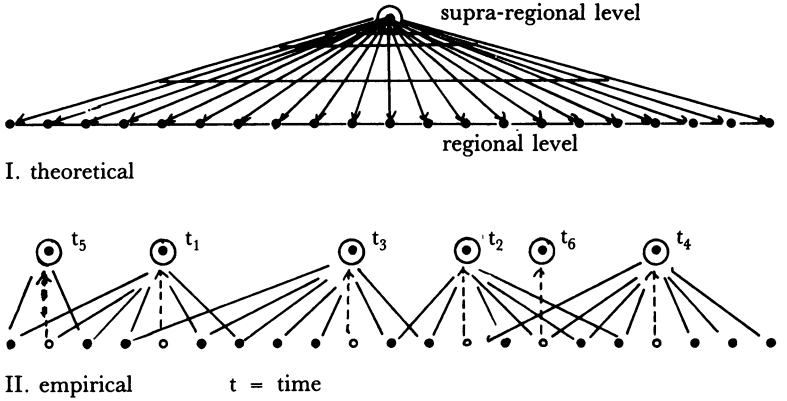

Fig. 1. Political relations in early continental Southeast Asia.

combined with pig breeding (Higham and Kijngam 1982), distribution of favours related to the supernatural, these rulers must have built their political networks. Some of them succeeded in getting more supra-local power because of external trade connections and resulting cultural brokerage. Because of the trade profits, they were able to invest in manpower, in religious donations, with which they finally were able to contest formal supra-regional political leadership, that — especially in the period prior to 1500 AD — is not firmly rooted. He who succeeded in becoming the new supra-regional leader at once started heralding his official status in one or more stone inscriptions. In retrospect, when analysing these stone inscriptions in combination with the suggestion of dynastic succession, it seems as though we are dealing with stable centralised political systems. In reality Southeast Asian kingship is only the top of the iceberg of underlying manipulative practices. In fact early Southeast Asia (prior to 1500 AD, and in some instances also later) is not much more than an area filled with regional political leaders who are constantly trading places.

This information may serve several purposes. It helps to elaborate on political dynamics in early Southeast Asia specifically, but it also raises some questions on political anthropological issues on leadership in general. What exactly are the boundaries between types of political leadership? And what determines these boundaries? From the data presented above it appears that on different levels of political centralisation the term kingship is applicable, not only because of the bias in the sources, but also because the political leaders on both regional and supra-regional level in fact fit the requirements of kingship: sacrality, benevolence, a central role in justice and protection (cf. Claessen 1978:

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555ff). But on the other hand what does that imply? These four characteristics can also be found with other forms/types of leadership on other levels of political centralisation (Hagesteijn 1984). Besides it is also possible to see both regional and supra-regional political leaders as 'Big-Men'. On the regional level the rulers are 'Big-Men' in the traditional Sahlins' sense: local manipulation of means and contacts that eventually are built into a more stable power base, that serves as a step up on the way to supra-regional power. On the supra-regional level, because of the competition, the authority of the ruler is also based on achievement, warfare, manipulation of trade monopolies, lavish gifts, display of wealth, clever marriages; authority that may be inherited by a charismatic son, but that also may vanish after the death of a ruler.

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EDWARD CH. L. VAN DER VLIET

'BIG-MAN', TYRANT, CHIEF: THE ANOMALOUS STARTING POINT OF THE STATE IN CLASSICAL GREECE

Political leadership in ancient Greece was marked by a number of features which seem to be more characteristic of 'Big-Man' systems than of rule in early states or even in chiefdoms. Leadership never went unchallenged and to a high degree it was dependent on the extent to which the leader was able to keep the support of his followers and fellow-citizens. His position as a leader rested on his achievements and his personality. It did not result automatically from birth or from an ascribed position as a lineage leader or something comparable. Although the nobility of his descent played a role as a starting-point of his career, it was not a decisive factor.

A few examples from Herodotos' *Histories* (written in the 5th cent. B.C.) will illustrate this. In making some critical remarks on the poetic traditions of the Trojan war Herodotos says that the Trojan prince Hector and not his brother Paris should have inherited the kingship from their father, not only because Hector was older, but also because he was 'the better man' (II, 120). In historical times (± 525 B.C.) during a dispute which of the two half-brothers should succeed to the kingship of their father in Sparta, one of them thought it was self-evident that he himself would be chosen because he was the first of the men of his age-group and outstanding in 'good quality', *andragathia*, that is virtue and courage in sports and war. When the other one, however, was preferred because of his elder birth, the first gathered a band of followers and went away to found a colony on the African coast (V, 42). A ruler of the *polis* of Cyrene, in Northern Africa, being expelled by his fellow-citizens and subjects, tried to recruit armed followers to enforce his comeback by promising the distribution of land (IV, 163). In the same way, the Athenian noble Miltiades the Elder who was dis-satisfied with the tyranny of Peisistratos, conquered his own dominion on the Thracian Chersonesos with the help of his band of followers (IV, 36). Peisistratos himself, ruler of Athens from 546 to 527 B.C., had finally succeeded in establishing his rule thanks to the support of a great number of friends and allies in other places who were under obligations to him (I, 61). In 489 B.C. Miltiades the Younger, the ruler of the Hellespont and the first among the Athenian generals who had led the citizens' army to victory

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over the Persians at Marathon the year before, hardly escaped being condemned to death and he was heavily fined. He had promised the Athenians that he would bring them 'countless riches' if they would furnish him with 70 ships, an army and other means to undertake an expedition. His attack on the island of Paros, however, proved a failure and as a consequence the great man lost nearly all his influence and power (VI, sqq.).

These are but a few instances of the importance of personal achievements in the functioning of Greek political leadership. This particular aspect of Greek political systems may account for the general instability of monarchical rule in ancient Greece as well as for the democratic tendencies in the development of Greek political institutions and practices. In this chapter I will try to answer the question if these peculiarities of Greek constitutional history can be explained by a different starting-point at the beginning of the Greek state, i.e. 'Big-Man' systems instead of chiefdoms.

The 'Big-Man' system has been considered as a dead end in the evolution of political systems in general (cf. Friedman and Rowlands 1977). Although social inequality is a characteristic feature of societies which are dominated by 'Big-Men': inequality between young and old, between men and women, between those who have achieved rank and status and those who have not, between the 'Big-Man' and his dependents or followers who are obliged to support him materially, this inequality does not imply a structural inequality between groups. The personal inequality which is inherent to 'Big-Man' systems cannot be turned into the structural inequality based upon kinship and descent which is characteristic of a chiefdom society (cf. Fried 1967; Claessen 1974: 101-103; Sahlins 1963). The degree of inequality in wealth and status in a 'Big-Man' society is determined mainly by the capacity to organise and the actual achievements of the dominating 'Big-Man' in person. Besides, this inequality is not permanent. As soon as the 'Big-Man' begins to grow old and his strength declines, his followers will leave him and other, mostly younger men, will strive to take over his position. With them, the whole cyclical story of the building up of influence and the acquiring of prestige begins again. There seems to be (cf. Weiner 1982) no way to inherit structural advantages from a 'Big-Man' position built up in earlier generations.

In this respect, the prospect of a chiefdom to grow into a state seems much better than that of a 'Big-Man' system to grow into a chiefdom. The position of a chief is ascribed. The social and political structure of a chiefdom rests upon a lasting network of kinship alliances and a clear distinction between nobility and commoners. From his position the chief

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can control the flow of status goods and thereby the building up of marriage alliances, as well as the distribution and redistribution of food and other necessities of life. Of course, he is bound to the obligation to distribute gifts and to give enormous feasts — depending on his prestige — but on the other hand he may exploit his central position to enlarge his status and influence and to try and use his authority to strengthen his control of the redistributive system. The achievements of a chief can be inherited by his successor to be further elaborated.

Although a 'Big-Man' seems less bound to a network of mutual obligations and has a better opportunity to function as a real 'entrepreneur' or 'capitalist' in his society than a chief, the 'Big-Man' system generally lacks the means to organise and to control the production of a more or less permanent surplus. The goods produced for the 'Big-Man' and stored by him will be distributed and consumed within the year of harvest. His management is a management not of means of production, but of social relations. These will disappear together with the 'Big-Man' himself. Besides, it seems that the most important underlying structural differences between a 'Big-Man' system and a chiefdom must be sought in their respective kinship systems. In general, the kinship system in a 'Big-Man' society is not hierarchical but egalitarian in character (cf. Claessen 1974). In one way or another there is a balance in the reciprocity of wife-giving and wife-taking groups, segmentary lineages are more common than extended lineages, there are no conical clans and one may expect that in 'Big-Man' societies patrilineality and patrilocality will be dominating matrilineality and matrilocality (cf. Claessen and Van de Velde 1985). On the other hand, in a chiefdom society inequality is mainly rooted in kinship relations. The different status positions of groups in respect of each other are determined by their genealogical distance from a common ancestor, wife-giver/wife-taker relations tend to be asymmetrical, extended lineages will be found and matrilineality and matrilocality play an important role in the structuring of marriage and kinship alliances. These differences also find their expression in the several systems of preferential bride choices. These aspects especially seem to make it difficult to achieve an evolution of a 'Big-Man' system to a chiefdom. That would require a complete restructuring of preferential bride choices and the ideology of kinship. The easiness with which the possibility of this evolution is accepted by Friedman and Rowlands (1977), for instance, does not convince me. Such a change will only be accepted with many hesitations, or it must be brought about by a very strong personality and it will take a long span of time to evolve. I know only one example of such a turning-point, which was observed by Pospisil among the

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Kapauku Papuans. An ambitious young headman deliberately broke the rules of incest of his society by marrying one of his siblings. However, he succeeded in getting his behaviour accepted as a new rule and in this manner he opened the way for intra-sib marriages and consequently for an evolution from a 'Big-Man' system to a more chiefdomlike structure of society. The progress of this change, unfortunately, was interrupted as a consequence of contacts with a colonizing power (Pospisil 1974: 214-332).

On the other hand Friedman (1982) argues that many known historical examples of 'Big-Man' systems in Melanesia were the result of a recent development. The hierarchical society which existed before and which was organised around the chief's monopoly of the acquisition and distribution of scarce prestige goods, was destroyed when these valuables became common good and became generally available as a consequence of contacts with Europeans. This caused the collapse of the power position of the chiefs and the fragmentation of the chiefdoms in numerous 'Big-Man' systems, which were characterised by strong status-rivalry. A development of this kind could also account for some specific aspects of the society in ancient Greece: the political fragmentation, the highly competitive status-rivalry among the nobles, the combination of chiefdomlike and 'Big-Man'-like features. Such a development may have occurred twice in Greek history. First, during and after the collapse of the early states of the Mycenaean period (1500-1150 B.C.) which interrupted the import of prestige goods altogether, and later, after the trade contacts with the Near East had been recovered, but the distribution and the flow of luxury articles mainly took place outside the spheres of control of the chiefs or nobles. These, however, are speculations which I will leave aside now. To confirm or to reject this hypothesis we need an elaborate analysis of the distribution and the flow of goods in Greece from the 11th till the 6th centuries B.C.

This leads me to another, more general question: how can 'Big-Man' systems be recognized with purely archaeological means? (cf. Renfrew and Shennan 1982). We must realize that, in this respect, most of the data at our disposal originate from burials and burial customs, but that most 'Big-Men' achieve their highest position in the prime of their life and loose much of their prestige in their old age. We cannot be sure that their former position generally will be reflected in their burial. We must reckon with the possibility and even the probability that many burials of 'Big-Men' cannot be distinguished from those of others. In this respect it might be useful to make an analytical distinction between ranking as a societal phenomenon and as defined by Fried, and the 'Big-Man' as an essentially political phenomenon. I would not be surprised if it would be

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possible for the archaeologist to trace certain aspects of ranking, but not those of 'Big-Men'.

In the scope of the present chapter this is of particular relevance, because in a number of respects the society of ancient Greece seems more to resemble a typical 'Big-Man' system than a chiefdom. The kinship system was predominantly segmentary and egalitarian. Although there were nobles who claimed descent from certain heroes, who in their turn were the offspring of a union of the god Zeus with a mortal woman, we have no proof of the existence of extended or even hierarchical lineages (see esp. Bourriot 1976). Besides Greek society was predominantly patrilinear and patrilocal or neolocal. The family household was the basic social as well as economic unit, although a noble man could mobilise the support of a number of commoners. Nobility and leadership, however, had constantly to be renewed and confirmed by physical and material accomplishments. Although there are certain elements which resemble the concept of a stratified society, as it was defined by Fried, large and strong chiefdoms did not occur.

In the period preceding the establishment of tyrannies the Greek *poleis* were ruled by aristocracies. In my opinion tyranny actually meant the foundation of the state in ancient Greece. Traditionally, however, the aristocracies had been preceded by the rule of kings. In fact, there was little difference between the rule of the nobles and the rule of the kings. Besides, the tradition of the existence of a strong kingship in the Dark Ages (11th-9th cent. B.C.) is not very reliable (Drews 1983). If there were kings before the so-called abolishment of monarchical rule by the nobles, their influence and authority cannot have been greater than that of the aristocratic chiefs or headmen who took their place. Moreover, the aristocratic chiefs in general were called by the common Greek word for 'king', and any small community could and would count a number of them. They presided general meetings, pronounced judgement, performed religious duties, received, and asked for, gifts, but they had to give feasts and gifts themselves, as well.

In certain respects these nobles were clearly marked off from the 'commoners'. They were called the 'good' or the 'useful', in contrast with the 'bad' or the 'worthless'. Although they could claim their higher status by reference to their descent from a semi-divine ancestor, this never was a very strong legitimation of their rank and position. First and for all a noble man had to be recognised by his physical appearance and his behaviour. There was a continuous competition and rivalry for status among them and they had to prove their 'value' especially in war and in sporting contests: chariot racing, running, throwing the discus, and above all wrestling and boxing. A noble was 'good and beautiful', that

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means that he had a strong and athletic appearance. He was capable to defend himself and to protect his household and family against others, he was respected as a warrior and feared at games. A well-known scene in the *Odyssey* gives a clear impression of this mentality. When the hero, Odysseus, has been cast ashore on the island of the Phaiacians, he is welcomed with due hospitality by the king, who recognizes him immediately as a noble man because of his stature and behaviour. The next day Odysseus is presented to the council of the other 'scepter bearing kings' and the people of the Phaiacians. However, when one of the Phaiacian chiefs invites him to participate in a sporting contest — ''for sure, we can see that you are no commoner, your stature does not look bad, your thighs are strong, just as your hands and your arms, your neck is robust, your waist is wide'' — Odysseus refused and is reproached immediately: ''you are not a man who is able to fight a contest, you are a commoner, a sailor who is out for a dishonest gain and who is anxious about his merchandise!''. But Odysseus instantly refutes this insult by throwing the discus farther away than any of the Phaiacians had thought it possible (cf. Finley 1956; Adkins 1960).

'Godlike', so these nobles called themselves. They dominated social life. They had the right to speak in the assembly, but they did not have the power to enforce their will against opposition. They had to bargain and to persuade. They expected to receive gifts, but on the other hand they were also expected to give lavishly and to maintain their band of followers. When one of them was 'the' king, he was only the first among his equals. Kingship was a kind of chieftaincy, but in general it does not seem to have been an ascribed position. The king kept it as long as he was able to. When Odysseus, who was a great hero, was absent from his kingdom of Ithaca and when there were rumours that he was dead, there was no one to take over his position. His son was too young, and the other nobles strongly rivalled with each other to be recognised as the best by being accepted as a new husband by Odysseus' wife, whereas Odysseus' father was an old man who led a retired life and did not have any influence on the course of the events. Recently, Donlan (1982: 12) characterised this society as ''something more than a 'Big-Man' system, something less than a stable and orderly advanced chiefdom''. Although something else could be said of the ''orderliness of advanced chiefdoms'', this characterisation seems to be correct. In a way, we may call this a stratified society, but status positions and chieftaincies were acquired rather by achievement than by ascription, although they seem to have been destined for those who were of noble birth. But nobility by birth could also be acquired or lost within a few generations.

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On the other hand there seem to be some remarkable and important differences between Greek society in the Dark Ages and those societies where typical 'Big-Man' systems occur. Generally, one of the foundations of power of a 'Big-Man' is his control over women or over the goods necessary to marry a wife. In Melanesia, an aspirant 'Big-Man' has to spend a lot of effort to marry a sufficient number of wives and to build up a network of kinship relations which will provide him with the means to attach to himself a large number of followers. In his turn he is now able to help them to acquire the goods required for marriage payments. A comparable situation occurs among the Lele in Central Africa, where the young men are dependent on the old men who have the wives and the managerial capacities to produce the raffiah cloth the young men need to pay for a bride (Onwuejeogwu 1975: 205). One of the basic elements of this system, therefore, is the fact that a man can control the production of food or prestige goods by marrying more than one wife. This, however, was virtually impossible in ancient Greek society. In ancient Greece marriage nearly 'without exception' was monogamous. The control of production or status goods with the help of a network of marriage connections and obligations, which was made by marrying many wives, could not have occurred there.

We know, however, that the Greek nobles were able to gather large bands of followers whom they led in piratical and other kinds of marauding expeditions. In this respect it may be clarifying to pay some attention to a not very well-known social institution, the so-called *hetaireia*. In classical Athens (5th cent. B.C.) the *hetaireia* is known as a kind of an informal aristocratic club, while formally *hetaireia* were prohibited. The word *hetaireia* derives from *hetairos*, which means: companion, follower. In the epic tradition the kings each had their own *hetairoi*, who seem to have been their equals of the same rank, but who sometimes held a somewhat inferior position (cf. Vlachos 1974). In the classical age the *hetaireiai* as formal institutions still existed on Crete, where the society had kept a lot of archaic features and where in most of the *poleis* the rise of the state was a rather late phenomenon (after the 5th cent. B.C.). Cretan society was stratified. There were clear distinctions between the nobles, the free, and the different categories of the half-servile population. The nobles probably held chieflike positions. Their influence and authority, however, did not rest on an extended network of marriage or lineage connections, but on their number of followers. In this respect the *hetaireia* must have played a central role. These clubs were formed by the sons of the most notable and influential men. They chose younger boys as their companions in a relationship with obvious homosexual elements. The elder one, the lover, had to abduct the boy he had chosen, and to

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spend some time with him in the wilderness. The friends of the chosen boy had to try to prevent the abduction, but not in a serious way. On the other hand, the boy could reject his aspirant lover when he did not deem him worthy enough, and the abductor had to show his intentions by the giving of presents. The whole company, the abductor, the abducted and the friends of the abducted spent some time together hunting and feasting and at their return in the *polis* the affair was ceremoniously ended with the bringing of offers and the giving of valuable gifts by the lover to his beloved. These gifts had to include a warrior's equipment, an ox and a drinking-cup.

The members of a *hetaireia* enjoyed high esteem in Cretan society. The laws of Gortyn, for instance, show that the social distance between them and the others, free, half-free and slaves, was greater than that between free and not free. It is not certain if a *hetaireia* actually was the same as the male club of an *andreion*, but we may assume this was highly probable. The *andreion* consisted of ten or twelve members. They took their meals and feasted together. In each polis, the food for *andreia* was set apart as a portion from the whole yield of the land.

A comparable institution could be found in Sparta. There, however, the whole system of the education and the training of the young men, the age-classes of the boys and the clubs of the adult men had been made subservient to the organisation of the Spartan state. In Sparta, for instance, the food for the clubs of the adult men was not taken from the whole of the tribute paid by the servile subject population, but furnished by the individual members from plots of land allotted to them and worked by serfs. Although the elite of the 'Spartiatoi' presented themselves collectively as a body of equals, there were clearly marked differences of rank and status between them. The young Spartans were divided into yearly age-classes and had to undergo a severe training in hunting, war and the art of survival in the wilderness. They were organised in groups under the leadership of older boys. When they reached the first years of adulthood, about the age of twenty, those groups were called 'herds' under the leadership of a 'leader of the herd' (*boagos*). The *boagoi* belonged to the most notable among the Spartan families, whose members alone were qualified to fulfill certain public functions. They could also adopt boys of inferior birth into their ranks, and the so-called foster-brothers of the *boagoi*, belonging to this category of adopted inferiors, qualified in this way to perform high functions (see esp. Chrimes 1949).

There is much parallelism between the Cretan and the Spartan institutions and we may assume that originally they had parallels elsewhere in Greece too. The whole complex of training and education, adoption

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and companionship formed part of the social institution of the male club. Before the rise of the states these clubs had a central and leading role in social and political life. Their members or at least their leading members belonged to the nobility. Although in a way these 'companions' were considered as equals, there must have been differences in status and rank between those who were originally of noble birth and those who had been admitted by adoption or the establishment of a love relationship. Obviously, these clubs had been formed during the youth of their members by sons of noble fathers. Prestige and the giving of valuable gifts, among them a warrior's equipment, played an important role in their formation. The social functions of these clubs, however, are not clear. We may assume that these *hetaireiai* formed the core of bands of adventuring warriors and pirates. A warrior-ship, for instance, had a crew of 30 to 50 men. We may also assume that the successes of these bands contributed to the status of their leader and their members and furnished them with connections of guestfriendship with nobles elsewhere, as well as with riches. On the other hand, there must have been much rivalry, a strong competition and an investment of gifts and prestige goods in the process of their formation. I can imagine that one of the most important functions of the *hetaireiai* was to help and to enable young men to get the means to pay the prestige goods required for marrying a woman of high rank. If this be true, they would provide a parallel to the followings elder men gather in typical 'Big-Man' systems.

To conclude, I would like to return to the question whether ancient Greek society may be compared rather with 'Big-Man' systems than with chiefdoms. Characteristics of both can be pointed out. A short and superficial survey of the composition of funeral gifts in Athenian burials from the 11th to the 8th century B.C., however, gives me the impression of a chiefdomlike rather than a 'Big-Man'-like society. On the other hand, in this society the power basis of the chiefs was very small and their rank was established by a strong and unceasing competition. Features of 'Big-Man' systems were important too. Ancient Greek society may have been something of a mixture, as it is suggested by Donlan. In more than one respect this society may resemble those chiefdomlike 'Big-Man' systems in Oceania, which according to Friedman, had sprung from the fragmentation and desintegration of greater chiefdoms. In Greece, the place of these chiefdoms may have been taken by the early states of the Mycenaean age. But this typical, mixed character of Greek social systems helps to explain the typical structure of the Greek *polis*-states, where monarchical rule was remarkably weak. The rise of the state in this type of society presents another set of problems, of which one may say that on the one hand the chiefdomlike elements supported it, while

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on the other the 'Big-Man' elements undermined the rule of the tyrants and paved the way for more democratic practices and institutions.

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PIETER VAN DE VELDE

SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE EUROPEAN EARLY NEOLITHIC: BANDKERAMIK LEADERSHIP

Introduction: the Problem

About 10 years ago various journals carried articles by Milisauskas, in which he reported excavations in an Early Neolithic site in Poland (inter alia, Milisauskas 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976). At the time it was still fairly uncommon to find allusions to social structure in archaeological reports, even less did such articles reach anthropological journals. Milisauskas drew attention to uneven artefact-distributions, and to considerable variation in the size and construction of the huts of which he had unearthed the remains at Olszanyca. On the basis of ethnographic analogy he inferred that either a 'Big-Man's' or a Men's House had to be assumed as explanation for these observations.

Explanations by analogy are rather weak, methodologically; I think that the matter justifies some further consideration. I shall try to set up a theoretical framework to give a more deductive account. However, a considerable part of the theories that go into that construction are no more than empirical generalizations, and my explanation must be considered hypothetical, consequently.

Introduction: the European Early Neolithic

It is accepted fact that agriculture has been introduced into temperate Europe in the second half of the sixth millennium B.C. (c. 4500-4000 B.C. in conventional radiocarbon years). The new way of life spread from the Balkans in a Westnorthwestward direction over the loessbelt (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria, Bavaria, the Rhineland, the Southern tip of the Netherlands, and well into Belgium and France). In the literature this spread is attributed to the 'Linear Pottery', or 'Linearbandkeramik', or 'Danubian I', culture; the first two names point to the characteristic decoration of the abundantly preserved pottery, the third to the main axis of their thrust. Below, I will use 'Lbk' for them, much as 'Hurons' stands for the people, the society, and/or the culture of the Hurons.

The use of a single name covers a considerable diversity in the Lbk, which has been present from their earliest known manifestations. With

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time, this diversity increased. Thus, in some areas villages consisted of 10 to 20 or more huts (e.g., in the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Paris Basin), in other areas single farmsteads or small hamlets were scattered over the landscape (a.o., on the Aldenhoven Plateau in the Rhineland to the West of Cologne; or in Lesser Bavaria). With a slightly warmer climate than today, virgin broadleaf forests, fresh brooks, and plenty of wild animals to be hunted in wood and water, ecological stress will have been minimal in the beginning. People preferred settlement on spots from where the surrounding country could be commanded, if available near the edge of a plateau. Within a few centuries, they had filled in all loessic and similar areas; the surge in the number of graveyards in the final phases of the Lbk is a sign of mounting concern with rights to localities, such as would occur in times of environmental stress (Chapman *et al.* (eds.) 1981). Subsequently, they 'died out' in some areas (as in the Southern Netherlands); in other areas earthworks are indicative of defensive measures (e.g., on the Aldenhoven Plateau). In several areas continuity, and transformation to succeeding cultures can be demonstrated. After some 8 to 20 generations, the Lbk, as a distinct entity, came to an end.

Archaeologically the Lbk is well known: many excavations of single huts, of villages, even of landscapes have yielded huge quantities of artefacts and continue throwing up ever more details (e.g. Lüning 1983). However, research into these societies has been less intense (for a critical survey see Van de Velde 1979). The Lbk has been hypothesised to exhibit leadership of either the 'Big-Man' or the Chief variant. The communities were linked by exchange chains on a continental scale; e.g., shells from the Black Sea turned up in Central and Western Europe, and the stone of their adzes came from considerable distances, too. Households consisted of single nuclear or extended families, and the largest villages counted some 200 or more inhabitants (Van de Velde 1979; also cf. Milisauskas 1982).

Some Theoretical Considerations

Archaeological remains tend to be more indicative of structures and of generalized behaviour, than of individuals or events (Hill and Gunn 1977), especially when allowances have to be made for pre-depositional selection and post-depositional transformation processes. Structural properties will be less amenable to such disturbances than single elements, I suppose. Accordingly, archaeological theory and interpretation must derive from considerations of a structural kind. This is equally so with graveyard data: if their interpretation has to attain some validity

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it must proceed from the whole to the parts (Binford 1972). The operationalisation of sociological concepts 'middle range theories' or 'bridging arguments' should also be structurally conceived rather than per single concept.

When dealing with leadership in societies with a neolithic signature (i.e., what used to be called 'tribals') a number of aspects is usually ignored: there is more to the subject than the 'Big-Man'/Chief dichotomy or the related poor man/rich man opposition.

Recently, Claessen (1984) wrote a concise synopsis on the topic 'Big-Man'/Chief. According to him the old dichotomy cannot be accepted any more, nor its corollaries 'Big-Man' Societies/Chiefdoms. Instead, there is a continuum from 'Big-Man' to Chief, from ascribed to achieved status; empirically, most 'tribal' societies would possess both types of leadership. Originally the dichotomy was conceived of as polar 'Idealtypen' (Sahlins 1963), but subsequent literature (not only archaeological!) tended to ignore this methodological minute, and sought to characterize societies as of one type or the other.

'Big-Men' are the self-made managers of power. By skilfully manipulating relations, optimal allocation of gifts, sponsorship of ceremonies, wit and treason, they establish for themselves a base for wielding power. Their base is structurally weak, it will support them only as long as their capabilities keep. Chiefs, however, have power because of their position in the kinship system; their place is established and secured through genealogical reckoning. Political power remains in their hands until abdication or death. To a chief, societal success is a matter of heredity, to a 'Big-Man', of ability (Sahlins 1963). In daily life, in empirical situations, however, chiefs or heirs to such positions are outwitted and pushed aside if not annihilated when their political acumen is insufficient; 'Big-Men's' kingroups show dynastic aspirations. In many chief-controlled societies upward mobility is a real possibility; councils of lineage heads or elders often provide an effective check on too power greedy 'Big-Men' (Claessen 1984). In fact, in a remarkable essay on this very topic Allen (1984) points to gerontocratic power — the power of the oldest living members of the local lineages — as the third locus of power in 'tribal' society. Whereas Claessen's essay deals with form and classification, Allen discusses mainly the local societal background of the various types of leadership in Melanesia. He finds that 'comparatively' gerontocracy is most important in societies made up of co-resident patrigroups; the elders then jointly manage the local affairs. When the groups are dispersed and have members in different localities, as is often the case in matrilinear societies, it is possible for political entrepreneurs to align people from different lineage

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segments and locales, thus reducing the relative importance of the elders; these entrepreneurs are the familiar 'Big-Men'.

When in such 'disharmonic' societies — *sensu* Lévi-Strauss — the lineages are locally ranked, or when rank is distributed through some age-grade system, a situation exists in which a cunning member of a (near-)dominant group can attain some chiefly status/community leadership: an amalgam of hereditary group-ranking and 'Big-Manship'. Especially in such a context a chief and some 'Big-Men' are likely to be present simultaneously.

The legitimation of the leaders has different domains of appeal. Achievement and competition, association with successful social innovations, etc., are the realm in which 'Big-Men' thrive. Status by birth, lineage success and titles constitute the sphere of chieftains. Old age, sometimes position within the lineage too, public skill are weighty in gerontocratic legitimation (Allen 1984).

It might be added that group size is not (or need not be) related to type of leadership. Following the lead of Johnson (1982) even a gerontocracy in pure and unadulterated form would be capable of organising a community of some 250 to 300 people. This figure is higher than the run of neolithic societies ever attains. From this I conclude that gerontocracy can be considered in the same domain as (petty) chiefdom and 'Big-Man' society, they are comparable entities.

Both Claessen's and Allen's articles are concerned with generalisation and classification of ethnographic particulars in a broad sense, so this may well be the place to try to continue in the direction of a more independent classification. As I see it, there are two axes involved in the above: in the first place the familiar one with ascription and achievement at its poles; it points to the basis of power in society. However, instead of the usual opposition of 'Big-Man' (the achieved end) and chief (the ascribed end), it is to be noted that both chiefs and gerontes belong to the ascribed category. On the criterion of power basis a polarity — which is not a dichotomy — can therefore be constituted of 'Big-Men' on the one pole of achievement; gerontes and chiefs reside on the other pole of ascription.

The second axis can be constructed as indicating the locus of power in society: it is with an individual, or it is with a group. As, technically speaking, even one is a group, this axis also shows continuity from 1 to n, from one person over an increasing number to a collectivity. Disregarding anarchistic collectivities and people's assemblies as more appropriate forms for post-industrial states, in the neolithic sphere this collectivity is better characterized by the word 'heads' than by 'chiefs', 'gerontes', or anything comparable. For, using 'heads' all types of

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lineage or other group-heads from able-bodied to oldest living persons are incorporated, even 'petty chiefs'. The distinctions here may be more of ethnographic detail than fundamental.

As it has been reported repeatedly (cf. Allen 1984), when a 'Big-Man' is present in a society, then generally there will be more in the same village. They will act on an individual basis, not collectively. In other words, they are relatively outside the single/collective polarity.

Together, this can be summarized in the following neat little model:

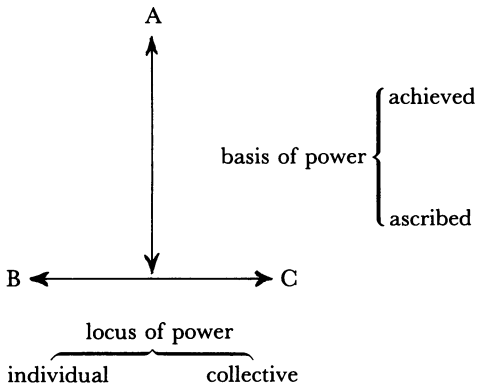

Fig. 1: A dissection of the power domain in neolithic society.
A. 'Big-Man'-type power
B. Chief-like power
C. Heads/Council type power

Note that the basis-of-power axis also opposes dispersed kingroups (on the A-pole) to coherent kingroups, and that the locus-of-power axis opposes disharmonic or translocal regimes (B-pole) to harmonic or localised systems (on the C-pole). To Allen, these societal types are the prerequisites for the emergence/existence of the 3 types of leadership (Allen 1984).

The above is merely an exercise in classification; the evolution of neolithic leadership should also be considered. Perhaps it is justifiable to assume some ranking throughout the early prehistory of the species (cf. Johnson 1982). Anti-hierarchic societies should then be derived from non-egalitarian systems instead of the other way around. With that subject we need not be concerned here, but rather with the drives behind systems evolving towards one of the poles stipulated above. I.e., the factors that account for a neolithic society's position relative to the above power domain.

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An article by Friedman (1982) on the sociopolitical evolution of Oceania can be of some use here. Contrary to Allen, Friedman is almost exclusively interested in regional conditions — for him social transformations (evolution) take place on a regional scale. Omitting the details, chiefly ('Headman' in the model above) societies must be seen as the starting point of Pacific social evolution; 'Big-Man' systems are deviations to either side of it. The driving mechanism of the local evolution is inter-group exchange of exotic valuables and rarities, Friedman hypothesizes. Exotic valuables are used as status insignia, especially telling of the outside relations (: access to wealth) of the proud owner. As long as the amount of valuables remains proportional to the workings of the system, chiefly societies can develop into chiefdoms, even paramountcies. In the model, the trajectory is stable in the corner B area. A change in the availability of the exotics seriously affects the possibilities of further development, as the means of expressing status differences, which are at the heart of the system, are involved. When on the one hand the influx approaches zero — and severed relations can be caused by many factors — power competition will seek other ways of expression, mainly internal strife. In such societies leadership will tend to go to the strongest; a non-hereditary, and so 'Big-Man' criterion. I.e., from the B corner to the A corner area. On the other hand an increase in the amount of available values will undermine the position of the chiefs, too. For, if there is more supply, there will be more consumers; therewith the monopoly of the Heads is broken. When the old order has been weakened that way the door is wide open to the emergence of 'Big-Men': the successful definition of new status insignia is likely to be done outside the old power circuit. Again, the trajectory is from the right hand corner to the top area in the model (Friedman 1982).

Friedman describes Pacific social evolution; his theory cannot be transposed directly to other areas. Though the use of exotics as status badges is universal, I don't think that their going out of use will generally be so problematic. In my opinion the human mind is sufficiently power-lusty to come up with new insignia (for it is with insignia that we deal, not with their backing). For instance, a monopoly in the supernatural realm (but not only there; more down-to-earth exotics will also do) can be a convenient way out, and be a block to a sliding off of society towards social innovators like 'Big-Men'. Friedman does not consider this alternative; yet it would be more in line with some of his earlier writings (most notably Friedman and Rowlands 1977) to bring in the local power base of those that have access to exotics. Valuables can be acquired only when there is something to exchange, and this power fund does not simultaneously stop with the failing of a ceremonial exchange

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link. The theory may be useful in pointing to the role of external relations and exotic valuables in local power systems, for a more general understanding of social evolution it seems too specific.

A Presentation of Data

There are two sets of data which I want to relate to Lbk leadership: hut-plans and configurations, and adze-distributions. I have extensively dealt with the first of these sets elsewhere (Van de Velde 1979); for demonstrative purpose I will repeat the main points here, with some additions.

Common to almost all Lbk settled areas is the simultaneous occurrence of three distinct types of huts; whenever a settlement is sufficiently large it will show all three types. All huts have one module in common, which consists of a particular arrangement of constructional features (posts, walls). A hut consisting of this module only, is of 'type 3' (for further details Modderman 1970); its frequency is up to about 1/3 of the huts in a settlement. A considerable number of huts (up to ½) had one different module added, always on the same side of the first one; its most conspicuous feature is a wall construction of wooden boards around the outside. Huts possessing the two modules are labeled 'type 2'; this second module does not occur independently but only in combination with the first one. If also a third module was added, this time to the other end of the first one, then the hut is of 'type 1'. It occurs in general to about 1/3 of the huts present (in Czechoslovakia, almost all huts are of this type; Soudský 1966; Soudský and Pavlů 1972). Again, this module was not found independently of the other two. In many excavations, a conspicuous variation on type 1 has been found; otherwise similar, it has wooden boards all around; this type has been christened '1a', its 'regular' counterpart is 'type 1b'. As far as our dating methods go, it seems likely that in the larger settlements only one hut of type 1a existed at any time. The different modules vary in length (i.e. in number of yokes) between themselves; over the different types the sizes of the modules tend more or less to co-vary.

Again omitting details (see Van de Velde 1979), in the larger settlements huts are grouped in such a way that per group different types are represented, mostly 1b, 2 and 3 (sometimes either of these may be missing) to a total of 2 to 5 huts per group. In the larger settlements at least 4 or 5 such groups were present. Such groups show continuity over time in that rebuilding occurs in the same sector of the settlement. Although the number of huts present is variable over time, the individual groups can be followed as separate entities (also: P. J. R. Modderman, pers.

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comm., May 1984). It appears that the hamlets on the Aldenhoven Plateau and in Southern Germany each consisted of one such group.

Type 1a huts pop up in an interesting way: they replace the 1b-type in each group in turn. In the (smaller) hamlets in other Lbk areas type 1a huts are found irregularly, *suggesting* a similar fluid patterning.

Assuming that each Lbk hut was inhabited by one household, a number of inferences can now be made regarding leadership in that society:

1. The apparent continuity over time of the hut groups suggests an organization in permanent, localised groups.
2. The composition of these groups in terms of hut types suggests a ranking of the individual households.
3. The per group always solitary occurrence of type 1 huts — as opposed to the frequent plural occurrence of the other types — suggests a special function of some inhabitants of that dwelling (as the same types and quantities of debris are found along *all* house types, they must have had similar housing/sheltering functions, with no exceptions for the type 1a huts, as has been suggested (Milisauskas 1972). See, however Boelicke (1982) where different ranges of crops are reported for several hut types; to me, this smacks of economic privileges for the inhabitants of the larger dwellings).

After an analysis of a Lbk graveyard I inferred that there were 4 patrilocal groups in the cemetery, linked by matrilinearity. I now consider that derivation a methodical sin, but the subsequent test of the statement on the settlement's pottery distribution still stands. No objections have been voiced and the inference will be considered valid below. Therefore, a further development of the above points can be made:

1' Hut groups in the larger villages, and also the hamlets, housed *de facto* patrilineages.
2' Individual households were ranked within these lineages.

Note also that in a 'disharmonic' (i.e. patrilocal-matrilineal) society the rights belonging to the non-localized principle will be associated with per generation different local groups. The 'jumping' of hut type 1a from group to group can therefore be assimilated to that principle. Since 1b-type huts are singular per local group/lineage, and type 1a huts are singular per village the latter must have ranked higher than the former. In hamlet settlement patterns the data are insufficient as yet, so hamlets and dispersed farmsteads are left out of this argument. Since the debris

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around this hut type is not different from that around the others (but cf. below) it can be inferred that:

2'' the ranking principle of the households per group was according to their association with particular matrilines, or *vice versa.*
3'' The type 1 huts held the households of the heads: 1b of the patrilineage's leader, 1a of the leader of the village.

It is specially relevant here that the distribution per settlement of characteristics of pottery decoration was so very structured, i.e. retrodictable. From this a loose type of social organization can be ruled out *a priori.* With reference to Allen (1984), dispersed clans with loosely defined patrilocality should have left less well-structured data.

As regards 'Big-Men', the evidence (huts, configurations of huts; the adzes as below; but also pottery decoration) can be fitted most economically to ascriptive features. 'Big-Men' should be visible in more erratic, unexpected data, true to their achievement-aimed nature. Some such erratic structures are known: in the Dutch Lbk cemetery already alluded to (Van de Velde 1979) I noted some achievement-indicators, which I then referred to specialisation. However, I was not able to name these specialisms. They were represented by more than the usual number of gravegoods of one type: relatively abundant arrowheads, or more pots than expected. If any, these should be indicative of 'Big-Men'/'Women'. Still, notwithstanding these higher quantities, they are by no means very high (7 arrows, 3 pots) and they fall within the regular spectrum of gravegifts; there is no true deviance, let alone a new idiom. Moreover, it would be stretching the definition of 'Big-Men' too far, to make every achievement-like exception a 'Big-Man'. All in all, the very much patterned data convey an image of a tight social structure, with few signs of openness.

In view of model and theory above, it can be concluded that there is evidence in the village-dwelling-Lbk of both lineage Heads and Chiefs. The former are also attested in hamlet type settlements, while for the latter the data are insufficient. One restriction is to be made: the statements 1' through 3'' relate only to the Dutch Lbk (with a village settlement pattern) and the Lesser Bavarian Lbk (with a hamlet pattern). For the other areas, these statements are hypothetical, they should be tested on applicability and relevance.

To turn now to the adzes. In three areas to be considered here (Southern Netherlands, the adjacent Aldenhoven Plateau, Olszanyca) the stone type out of which they have been made, is not locally available: they are exotics. The sources are in the order of hundreds of kilometres

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away, outside the Lbk settled areas. Whether they are rare — a prominent feature in Friedman's theory — is another matter though. At Olszanyca, 28 were found in an area with remains of 10 huts. On the Aldenhoven Plateau, 53 derive from the neighbourhood of 38 huts; and in the Southern Netherlands 81 adzes were found to 192 huts (see the Table). In other words, the number of adzes per hut varies from c.3 in Olszanyca over 1.4 at the two Aldenhoven settlements counted, to c. .4 in the Southern Netherlands (3 settlements counted). If they are rare anywhere, it is in this latter region. Besides, both on the Aldenhoven Plateau and in the Netherlands a Lbk cemetery has been excavated; they yielded 41 and 40 adzes resp., to 32 (out of 109) and 33 (among 113) graves (Dohrn-Ihmig 1980, 1983; Modderman 1970). Thus in a region where these tools were at least relatively rare, as many have been interred as gravegifts as in a region where they are thrice as abundant. It appears, then, that especially in the Dutch Lbk adzes were valued as status badges; for behind those buried, the representatives of the local Lbk society stood. Their occurrence at the Aldenhoven Plateau cemetery similarly points to their use as status indicators there. From the relative abundance in the settlements in both areas it may perhaps be inferred that they were valued more in the Dutch Lbk than among their Eastern neighbours.

Hut types	*S. Netherlands*		*Aldenhove Pl.*		*Olszanyca*	
	n(h)	*n(a)*	*n(h)*	*n(a)*	*n(h)*	*n(a)*
1a	14	1	5	5	1	11
1b	54	17	13	8	3	8
2	80	14	9	4	2	-
3	25	6	4	3	1	-
x	19	1	7	3	3	-
Totals:	192	39	38	23	10	19
uncertain:		16		9		-
stray finds:		26		21		9

Table 1: hut types vs. numbers of associated adzes.

Sources: C. C. Bakels, pers. comm. 1981
Farruggia et al 1973
Kuper et al. 1977
Milisauskas 1973
Modderman 1959

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The problem with which this essay started concerned the differential distribution of adzes over a settlement. To finish off I would like to return to that. In the Table above, the numbers of adzes in firm association with the different types of huts have been enumerated, together with the huts of each type; possible associations and stray finds have been left out. From the Table, in the Dutch Lbk type 1a huts appear to lack virtually the prized adzes, whereas 1b huts have an apparent overdose (Chi-square test of this number vs. all others taken together, H_o 'proportional distribution'; yields p = .95). In other words the headmen of the patri-groups had disproportional access to these tools, and the village leader had apparently just as little access as the inhabitants of the type 2 and type 3 huts; one wonders whether his power was very 'etic', therefore. Again, this seems a fairly straight translation of Allen's Melanesia generalisation to the Lbk.

To the East, on the Aldenhoven Plateau things were much less clear-cut. Chi-square yields p = .80 for 1a vs. other hut type associated adzes, and 1b conforms entirely to the marginal expectation. I am inclined to deny a monopoly on the use of adzes in this area; this does not imply that they were not valued, but that access was more or less open.

At Olszanyca, things were different again. It is clear that only inhabitants of type 1 huts had access to adzes, with a very high concentration around the type 1a hut (p = .995). However, the data from Olszanyca relate only to a small part of the settlement and it would not be prudent to accord definitive status to them. The social structures derived for the Dutch Lbk cannot be assumed for Olszanyca, well over 1000 kms to the East. On that basis, it can only be tentatively said that the adze monopoly was held by the headmen of the village; 'Big-Men' cannot be found on present evidence.

Conclusions

Let me summarize the main points:

A model for describing the power domain in neolithic societies has been developed. Power can be defined there in three ways: on the basis of either *achieved* (the classical 'Big-Men') or *ascribed* (hereditary position of power) power. Ascribed power will be vested in 1 person, or 2, .., or a collectivity (resp. a Chief, and Headmen). Usually, any particular neolithic society will exhibit signs of all three tendencies; the emphasis will differ from one society to another. As this model is substantially context-free, it should be generally applicable to neolithic societies.

Coupled with this model (but not context-free) are: an opposition of dispersed and coherent kingroups parallel to the achieved/ascribed axis.

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Also, disharmonic or translocal kinsystems in polar opposition to localized or harmonic systems, parallel to the Chief/Headmen axis.

On the bridging argument that past social structures are evidenced by specific archaeological (artefactual/data) structures, it was found that:

1) Lbk villages consisted of a number of *de facto* patrilineages, hamlet type settlements were inhabited by one such group.
2) Per patrilineage, the households were ranked according to their association with particular matrilines, or the other way round.
3) Power in the Southern Dutch Lbk villages was vested with the headmen of the patrigroups; there was also a matrilineally defined village chief. For 'Big-Men' some likely candidates were very briefly considered, and rejected: achievement labels could not be related to power wielding.
4) In the Southern Dutch Lbk the lineage heads held a monopoly over the use of adzes, which, being made of exotic material, were apparently considered valuables. The village chief fell outside this monopoly. For two other sets of data (from the Rhineland, and from Olszanyca) hypotheses regarding the rights to adzes were formulated.
5) No evolution has been described — the theory adduced for this purpose was found to be too narrowly framed.

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ALEX T. STRATING AND G. CHRISTIAAN UHLENBECK

AN EXPLANATORY MODEL FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE OF A POLITICAL SYSTEM

The field of Political Anthropology may be roughly divided into two distinct traditions. On the one hand the evolutionary approach, determined to establish the causes behind the genesis of different forms of political organisation and on the other the structural-functionalist tradition which in its earliest and purest identity sought to analyse the functioning of the governmental institutions and the systems of socio-political control. Inaugurated by the appearance of "African Political Systems" in 1940, this British structural-functionalist line of enquiry underwent a strong development. A list of the anthropologists who wrote in critical reaction or loyal support of the original paradigm set out by Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard and Fortes, would include all the major exponents of the British anthropological tradition. This development has ended. The structural-functionalist political anthropology after three decades of an apparently fruitful interchange with the original paradigm, became dispersed in a diversity of action-oriented approaches. One may well repeat Easton's criticism of 1959 that the sub-field of political anthropology is still not established and that a shared conceptual framework still does not exist (Easton 1959: 21).

The evolutionist interest in political phenomena, based in the United States, in Marxist Paris and the comparative, materialistic "Amsterdam" tradition within Leiden, developed less dramatically. It is characterised by a strong historic interest in societal transformations in reaction to a large variety of possible causal variables. The trap of teleological reasoning, the problem of theoretical abstraction from solid descriptions of individual historic instances of political development and the continuous process of reassessing the weight to be allocated to the causal factors behind the process seem to have hampered its development.

Following Bailey, one of the most influential action theorists, we will argue in this chapter in favour of the application of the distinction between political structure and rival political structure. It is only in this way that one may arrive at a better model for the explanation of structural change of political systems.

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Political Structure and Rival Political Structure

Action theory, taken as a common denominator of the position of a whole spectrum of political anthropologists who have reacted against the original structural-functionalist paradigm set out by Radcliffe-Brown (1940), and Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940) can basically be defined in the following terms:

> "(It) begins with the study of the individual within the framework of both formal and interstitial social organisation and then proceeds to the analysis of political action and interaction. Within political anthropology itself the approach differs from evolutionary and structural anthropology by virtue of its attention to processes, to political formations other than categories and corporate groups and, above all, by its underpinning in a particular mode of fieldwork (...) that resulted in a distinctive form of finely grained political ethnography" (Vincent 1978: 175).

One of the most important exponents of this approach in the field of political anthropology is Bailey. In his well-known "Strategems and Spoils" (1969) he described the conceptual pair 'political structure' and 'rival political structure' in the following terms:

> ..."an environment may contain rival political structures. An opposition party, hoping to take control after the next election is not a rival political structure: one would-be dictator, waiting his chance to murder the incumbent dictator is not a revolutionary but a contestant operating with the rules of that particular structure (within the same area). But an army leader who replaces a parliamentary democracy with his own brand of guided democracy does change the rules of the game, and while he was waiting and planning his coup and organizing support for it, he did constitute a rival political structure within the environment of the parliamentary democracy" (Bailey 1969: 15).

In the latter part of this quotation, Bailey refers to the ascent of Charles de Gaulle and in the concluding paragraphs of his book, he explains how De Gaulle manipulated the rules of the game outside the system of the parliamentary democracy of the Fourth Republic and instated the Fifth Republic with presidential rules as primary feature.

Bailey's distinction between political structure and rival political structure has its parallel in Firth's oppositional pair 'formal and informal structures' (Firth 1954: 4; 1955: 3; but also Wolf 1966: 2).

Unfortunately Bailey did not fully exploit the possibilities of the notion of 'rival political structure', although he recognized that its presence is a prerequisite for revolutionary change. We will argue that it is a prerequisite for *structural change* of the political system and that the dynamic force behind the process of change is generated by the dialectical relationship between 'political structure' and 'rival political structure'.

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If students of structural change of political systems accept this basic assumption it forces upon them the obligation to analyse both structures. We would suggest an analysis along the following lines.

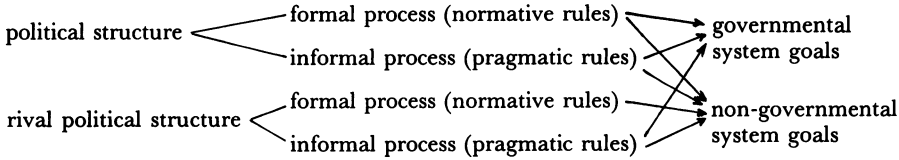

Fig. 1: An analytical model for structural change in political systems.

Each political structure has its own rules of political behaviour and within each political structure the actors try to accomplish different goals. The definition of goals is a purely individual matter. Some examples: a person with political ambitions tries to gain access to the formal political system through a process of formal elections after becoming member of a political party. He registers so to speak for the 'political structure'. He moves on in the political machinery and climbs up the hierarchy because of the quality of his speeches in the House of Parliament (normative rules) and because of his ability to mobilize support in the corridors by promising some of the spoils when he is in a seat of power (pragmatic rules). Eventually his goal is to become ultimately prime-minister (governmental system goal) or perhaps director of a large multinational corporation (non-governmental goal). Similarly a separatist from the South of France with political ambitions may choose to operate outside the political structure, in order to accumulate power in the rival political structure. Violence and assassinations may be viewed, in such a rival political structure, as formal processes which follow normative rules, while attempts to gain a seat in parliament may be regarded as informal, practical approaches to the problem of gaining independent government. Sometimes, e.g. in the case of Hitler's astonishing rise to power, ambitious politicians may participate in both political structures. Hitler took part in the parliamentary elections but at the same time acquired support by using terror and intimidation which were quite outside the boundaries of the political structure.

Evolutionary Political Theory and the 'Big-Man'

During the early days of fieldwork in Melanesia, observers noted that the classical term for designating the local leader, 'chief', did not fit. In the avalanche of anthropological fieldwork in Oceania just after the second world war, the concept of the 'Big-Man' was introduced. At first as

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a direct translation of a vernacular term, but later as a distinct sociological type. The 'Big-Man' stood for achieved leadership, small, short-lived polities, by faction-building through the distribution of pigs, by competitive feast-giving, etc. (Lindstrom 1981: 900-901).

This upsurge in fieldwork conducted in Oceania coincided with the revival of neo-evolutionist theory. It is therefore not surprising that Sahlins included the concept of 'Big-Man' in his evolutionary typology of political systems: the 'Big-Man' fitted neatly in the gap between acephalous societies and fully developed chiefdoms. In the Melanesian context Sahlins formulated it as follows:

> "Developing internal constraints, the Melanesian 'Big-Man' political order brakes evolutionary advance at a certain level ... But in Polynesia these constraints were breached, and although Polynesian chiefdoms also developed their developmental plateau, it was not before political evolution had been carried above the Melanesian ceilings" (Sahlins 1963: 168).

However, as soon as the typology was made the transition from one type to another became a difficult problem (Claessen, 1974: 104). A very recent attempt to address this problem was made by Allen (1984). Allen blames Sahlins of oversimplifying the contrast between Melanesian and Polynesian societies in terms of achievement vs. ascription. He tries to demonstrate that a more complex typology of political systems in Melanesia is necessary, arguing that societies of the 'Big-Man' type have a differential evolutionary potential depending on the type of descent-reckoning that is prevalent in a society. He concludes that matrilineal descent systems stimulate the institution of cooperative bodies outside the kinship sphere, in which ascriptive status prevails. The problem remains, however, that Allen can point out those societies with evolutionary potential, but cannot give an example of an ethnographically documented transition of a 'Big-man' system into a chiefdom. This transition is only logically deduced from the model: Polynesian societies have chiefs, therefore they should have passed the 'Big-Man' stage.

Within the current trend this problem will forever remain unsolved because of the fact that the arrival of western colonial powers ended the indigenous process of development. When we analyse, however, what has happened since Western colonial administration developed alongside existing political structures we may come up with a relevant model for explaining structural change.

Scarcity Structure, Rival Political Structure and Structural Change

'Big-Men' who lost their struggle for power fell back in the normal ranks of society without significant damage to their personal status.

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Their only possibility was to try again, father a new faction, create a new network of supporters, using the same resources as his conqueror. This holds true for the pre-colonial period (Oliver 1955). After the extension of Australian Government Authority on the Solomon Islands a new opportunity was opened to such drop-outs from the powergame. Some chose to pursue career among the missionaries, becoming the local catechist, or others tried to obtain a job within the colonial administration, as an interpreter, as a 'Hat Man' (headman) or police officer. Their political careers took on a completely new form and they did not play the game following the old 'Big-Man' rules. The advent of these leaders who built up their followings on the basis of totally different resources, became an immediate threat to the existing political structure.

The situation is also signalled by Allen (1984: 36)

> ... "a leader who has acquired dominance within the context of a particular exchange system must maintain his position not only against competitors within that system but also against other men who deliberately seek prominence as cultural innovators by launching new exchange systems or male cults or perhaps as advocates of such syncretistic phenomena as cargo cults, modified christianity or cash cropping".

Allen seems to consider these problems which face the 'Big-Man' as the 'evolutionary block' of the system. We would like to argue that it is precisely the competition between the original political structure and a rival political structure which generates structural change.

The 'rival political structure' is not a priori present in a society. We believe that the growth of a rival political structure is tied to the rise of a new 'scarcity structure'. The concept may be defined in the following terms: the total field of available resources in relation to their potential monopolisation. Resources include not only material goods, but also knowledge, lines of communication. With the term 'scarcity structure', we indicate that a resource as such does not exist; it becomes significant only when it has been tied to a potential user of the resource, and it becomes politically significant when the user is able to monopolise access to it, thereby creating a situation of scarcity.

In a typical 'Big-Man' society, the leader has control over a whole spectrum of resources thereby defining what is scarce and making them political potent instruments for the creation of dependency relations. When a colonial power arrives on the scene, new resources present themselves. If the 'Big-Man' is able to monopolise all contact with the colonial administration, the continuity of his position is more or less guaranteed (his office has undergone a structural change). If, however, as happens frequently in the Siuai context, rivals manage to claim access to external powers, it is likely that a rival political structure emerges.

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From the ensuing conflict between the two structures, a new political structure emerges, with a new scarcity structure.

Diagrammatically this can be presented as follows:

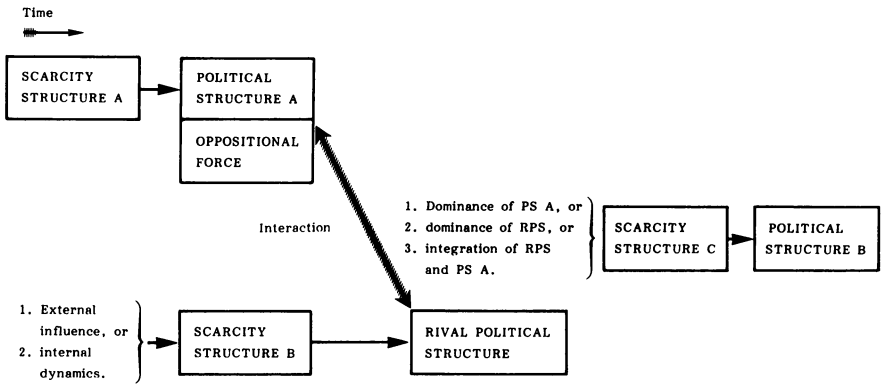

Fig. 2: Diagram of political evolution in society.

Not every development of a political structure depends on the interaction with a rival political structure. Internal competition for power within the boundaries of the existing structure creates limited change. Rival 'Big-Men' competing according to the 'classical 'Big-Man' rules' create an internal dynamic just like opposition-parties in parliamentary democracies.

To show that our model is applicable to different types of political development we will conclude this contribution with an example of structural change in the East of Holland.

During the 17th century a non-aristocratic rural elite (called the 'Scholtens') gradually established itself in the Eastern part of the Province of Gelderland. They became the largest political and economic force, taking over the characteristics and functions of the landed gentry. From 1860 onwards their power started to decline. Increasing industrialisation (tapping new resources) with the concomitant rise of new social categories in the small towns (Scarcity Structure B) threatened the erstwhile powerful Scholtens. Instead of reacting in a progressive fashion to the new developments, they persisted in their 'feudal' mode of production. The new elite, independent of the Scholtens, started to dominate the newly installed political structures (local councils). By this time a new political structure had emerged (second half of the 19th century). The state of Holland, however, supported in those early stages of parliamentary democracy the emancipatory movements in the society by extending the right to vote. This new numerical input in the

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powerstructure changed the position of the bourgeoisie elite. Votes became a new resource which they could not control and by 1930 a totally new powerstructure emerged, whereby landowning agrarian elite, urban elite and proletariate were united in a single system. This process follows exactly the steps set out in our diagram. The study of Wildenbeest (1983) on which the above is based illustrates the processes of interaction between the rival political structures. With this last example we hope to have illustrated the adaptability of our model in different circumstances. We tend to believe that its usefulness might be especially apparent in the context of state-formation. The question remains, however, whether enough information is available in the historical sources to analyse the crucial phase of interaction between rival political structure and political structure, along the lines set out in our diagram.

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PART TWO

CASE-STUDIES

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MARTIN R. DOORNBOS

'BIG-MAN' AND HIS BIG BROTHER: SOME NOTES ON INCORPORATION

'Big-Man', Chief and State Formation

'Big-Man', chief and state formation have provided key terms and ingredients of a good many discussions on the origins and evolution of statehood (Sahlins 1963; Allen 1984). State formation in this fascinating field of 'Early State' theorising essentially refers to those social, economic and political processes that gave rise to the first ancient state forms. State formation, however, also denotes continuous processes of institutional regeneration, in which 'Big-Men' and chiefs may again play important, though quite different roles. What is more, their respective roles themselves would seem to be contrasted, and possibly to contain different mixes of mobilising and symbolic roles. This article will explore the qualitative differences between the relationships concerned.

Incorporation

Almost inevitably in queries about the origins of states, a fair amount of speculation has been devoted to the question whether and under what conditions 'Big-Men', as the 'grassroots' leaders of kinship or small-scale local networks might have evolved into more regularised or institutionalised forms of headmen and chieftains, and eventually, to embody incipient state forms (Claessen and Skalník 1978). Wherever states have come into existence, even if only in a most incoherent form, a qualitative difference immediately suggests itself. Henceforth, the evolution of earlier forms *to* statehood will tend to be precluded and replaced by their absorption or incorporation *into* statehood. The reason for this is basic as well as simple. Once state forms have been 'invented', there is no way to erase their conception from a collective consciousness. Actual states might be dismantled or collapse but not their blueprints, i.e. the abstract idea of the state. Again, once in existence the concept or the reality of the state may figure as a model, possibly to be emulated in other non-state networks if it appeals to their membership.

Except for the origins of pristine statehood, state formation as a concept necessarily refers to processes that generate or re-generate state forms within contexts in which statehood is not unknown or may even be

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very much present. Different conceptions of state formation may nevertheless denote or emphasize different aspects or manifestations of this general cluster of processes. Thus, state formation may refer to the historical emergence of European and subsequently of other national states; to the creation of new Third World states as political entities; to the establishment, growth and differentiation of their state structures; to the crystallization and articulation of the role of the state and the concomitant manifestation of state power; and last but not least, to the progressive incorporation of various societal and political forms, groups and organisational networks into the general state structure. State formation in this latter sense focuses on the dynamic aspects of state-society relationships, in which the state may be conceived as 'penetrating' or even as 'swallowing-up' society.

For all their varying emphases and analytic interests, these different notions of state formation refer to processes occurring in contexts in which state forms and institutions have become an intrinsic part of the scene. In turn, this implies that state formation can only denote a continuous and recurrent process in which state formation and integration *per se* are matched by the deformation and disintegration of pre-existing forms, and in which incorporation and penetration are manifested through confrontation, adjustment and conflict, and through potential collaboration or resistance as the case may be. Today's version of these processes in many African and Asian contexts is a steady bureaucratic encroachment upon forms of local autonomy and grassroots representation, which in consequence are subject to erosion and potential eclipse. It is in such settings, characterized by institutional juxtaposition, substitution or confrontation as key features of state formation processes, that 'Big-Man' and chiefs may again be found among the main actors, though now quite clearly in different roles. There is now no question of 'Big-Men' gradually evolving into chiefly roles and positions, nor of chieftaincy or kingship figuring as the final culmination of such transitions. Rather, it is more likely that both 'Big-Men' and chiefs are confronted with expanding and imposing state systems which search for organisational connections with, and controls over, local and peripheral networks and communities. Frequently, indeed, it is precisely at that level that such connections and confrontations are pronounced most articulately. In various African and Asian countries it is evident that 'Big-Man's' Big Brother is watching and will take his chance whenever he sees it.

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Collaboration and Resistance

How do 'Big-Men' and chiefs react to these supra-level developments and challenges and can any discernible patterns to their responses and counter-strategies be identified? This question relates to several debates that have played a role in anthropology and colonial administration, and the answers have varied in the first place with researchers' perspectives on the role of the state. If a primary role in development strategies is assigned or attributed to the state and its machinery then its client chiefs and other contact agents at the end of the line who are closest to the 'field' are likely to be regarded as a kind of frontline force of modernisation and development in backward areas. On the other hand, if the role of government is viewed in a less innovative and benevolent manner, stressing instead its extractive and exploitative aspects vis-à-vis peripheral communities, then the chiefs, 'Big-Men' and other agents who act as its allies within the state's territory are more likely to be viewed as part of an oppressive apparatus, engaged in unwanted interference in local social and production relationships.

These two positions can be discerned in much of the literature on rural development and rural administration in Africa and Asia (Cliffe, Coleman and Doornbos (eds.) 1977: Conclusions). There is a shared appreciation of the strategic position of local level leadership, whether of a chiefly or of a 'Big-Man' type. Indirectly, they also reflect the implicit competition for this leadership's loyalty between the organising states interested in their alliance in reaching out to and seeking to control local communities, as against these local groups themselves who will be keen to have their protective support vis-à-vis the state. It is important to bear in mind, of course, that the incorporation of chiefs or 'Big-Men' almost invariably represents only the institutional dimension of more embracing strategies, aimed at gaining control over production processes. The institutional dimension is of key importance, though, because local chiefs and powerholders are likely to be assigned new but vital roles in any such redirected production relationships.

One past debate on colonial administration raised issues that seemed to be related more closely to the question of differential roles and dispositions of chiefs and 'Big-Men' as such. With reference to the colonial African experience, it has sometimes been asked whether Western bureaucratic procedures could more readily be introduced into societies with hierarchical socio-political structures, i.e. with centralised institutions and with a key role reserved for kingship and/or institutionalised chieftaincy, or into the so-called stateless societies, i.e. smaller-scale and rather dispersed socio-economic groupings and networks with the kind of

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structural features within which a more dominant role might be expected for entrepreneurial 'Big-Men'. Arguments have been advanced in favour of both viewpoints. Fallers, for example, formulated the general hypothesis that "societies with hierarchical, centralised political systems incorporate the western type of civil service structure with less strain and instability than do societies having other types of political systems — e.g. segmentary ones" (Fallers 1956: 242), while Apthorpe, on the other hand, took the position that "it is in societies which are *not* hierarchically centralised that western ideas of bureaucracy can be more speedily adopted" (Apthorpe 1960: 131).

These debates were not particularly fruitful, largely because the proponents of both positions failed to look into the nature, dynamics and impositions of the colonial frameworks and their effects on either centralised or non-centralised structures. This blind spot meant that a crucial element of the total situation tended to be overlooked in the analysis, which in turn made generalisations, let alone predictive efforts, of very limited value. Chiefs and 'Big-Men' have both been known to resist or to collaborate with colonial (or post-colonial) regimes in various contexts, and it is difficult to discern any general patterns, whether 'pro' or 'contra', to their respective dispositions and reactions on this score. Besides, it should be recognised that the choice and room for manoeuvre they had vis-à-vis powerful imperial forces was often extremely narrow, so that at times reluctance or even basical resistance had to be translated into involuntary collaboration. This caused a whole range of complex reactions to be manifested from outright resistance to active support, and often with considerable ambivalence as to the chosen position.

Mobilising and Symbolic Roles

If 'Big-Men' and chiefs can either collaborate with or resist the encapsulating contexts of their bigger brothers, however, is there no way in which at least the manner or mode of their reaction might vary? There might be scope here for a very tentative hypothesis, for *prima facie* evidence suggests that certain positions and roles would fit more closely with either of the respective types. Let us explore this more closely.

First, if 'Big-Men' stand out this will largely be due to their mobilising and entrepreneurial role in contexts that somehow allow them room for manoeuvre. 'Big-Men' are likely to be of larger than average size in terms of power, wealth or prestige or in sheer personality. Typically, they will be seen to manipulate and exploit connections and resources so as to arrange things for their own benefit and also, though for a price, for their followers, whether on a factional, clan or other basis. At least, this

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is what they are expected to do. 'Big-Manship', in fact, must be continuously proven and re-proven on almost a day-to-day basis, the key difference with institutionalised rulership being that there is nothing 'given' about it.

With these almost intrinsic structural characteristics, 'Big-Men' would seem likely to respond to incorporation strategies in one of two ways. Again, they may either collaborate or resist, dependent on circumstances and issues and particularly on the nature of the central state system and its policies. But if they do collaborate, 'Big-Men' are likely to try and exploit the new resources and possibilities offered by the larger context, flirting in middle-man fashion with their connections and influence vis-à-vis the new overlords and seeking to gain political space within the new institutional framework. 'Big-Men', it should be realised, are not without some opportunism, though this might be displayed either within the structural conditions of an acephalous, more or less egalitarian social framework, or within the scope for manoeuvre that is left within, or unoccupied by, bureaucratic organisations.

On the other hand, if and when 'Big-Men' have chosen to resist the incorporating state, they are likely to operate as leaders of resistance movements, playing their 'Big-Man' role by seeking to mobilise grassroots support and to exploit or create alternative resources in an effort to substantiate counter-strategies and local power. Sometimes 'Big-Men' may be expected to do this when their own position and prestige is threatened by the demands of the incorporating state, but they might also emerge as 'Big-Men' in the course of, and thus as a product of, the resistance struggle.

In contrast, chiefs are likely to perform rather different roles in collaboration or resistance, particularly if their position is more fully institutionalised and ceremonialised. Already, institutionalisation makes their role and position less flexible than that of 'Big-Men'. Moreover, traditional rulership has important symbolic dimensions, and these qualities will be particularly significant in situations of confrontation and crisis. The central organising state will naturally be keen to have the accommodation and support of established chiefs because of their symbolic and legitimising functions. Ironically, however, if chiefs do accommodate and become government chiefs operating within a colonial or post-colonial framework, the chances are that their role and authority within the community will erode and dwindle. Ultimately, in fact, they may be devoid of the very symbolic value which had been the initial cause of their interest to the central state authorities. On the other hand, if a traditional ruler joins, or appears to support any emergent forces of popular opposition, then again his symbolic role will be of key impor-

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tance. In contrast to his accommodative counterpart, a resistant ruler may gain in local prestige and authority; he may even become the symbol, rational and focal point of a grassroots movement of opposition, though without necessarily leading it himself.

Again, however, the complexity and lack of predictability of both strategies and responses is largely conditioned by contextual variables. These will require closer inspection for fuller appreciation of the motives for accommodation or resistance and, in turn, of the extent of popular support for the rulers' strategies. For example, new alliances between regional chiefs and an imperial power may be concluded with an eye to the power balance with competitive groups. Such a strategy, perhaps granting regional rulers a sub-imperialist role and enhanced powers over their rivals, may meet with the implicit or explicit consent of many of their followers who in turn would expect to benefit. Therefore, such an alliance will reflect differently on the ruler's position than that in which the chief or ruler group comes to confront the population at large.

The Lacustrine Kingdoms

A few examples from the Ugandan experience with incorporative policies — of which there have been several waves — may illustrate these divergent trends. Among the four Lacustrine Kingdoms, the Ankole kingship clearly illustrated the loss of symbolic relevance and the decline of a once central institution due to its accommodative stance in the process of incorporation. A fuller understanding of this would need to take into account various concomitant factors that cannot be detailed here (Doornbos 1975). Salient among them, however, was the willingness and interest of successive *Abagabe* (kings) and senior chiefs to comply with British prescriptions for their role in the colonial framework in return for seemingly strengthened and enlarged powers over the peasant classes. However, the uses made of traditional authority in order to legitimise colonial policy and practice caused its symbolic role to fade and even to become a negative value.

In contrast to the Ankole case, kingship and chieftaincy in Buganda retained (and generated) a greater degree of lustre, which was apparently not unconnected with Buganda's sub-imperalist role under the British umbrella, combined nonetheless with several major confrontations with the colonial power. Already in the 19th century Buganda's ruling group had been stronger and had had closer ties to the peasantry than that of Ankole, yet the particular position and powers maintained by Buganda's neo-traditional elite must not least be understood in the context of its strategic role during colonial transformation (Apter 1967).

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Yet a different experience and position was that of the Bunyoro monarchy in the context of incorporation. The most explicitly resistant of the lacustrine kingdoms, this formerly extensive empire suffered the greatest loss, yet showed the most unified opposition to British *cum* Buganda strategies. Bunyoro kingship articulated this proto-nationalist sentiment from within its restricted scope for manoeuvre, and in turn could count on a fair measure of grassroots support (Steinhart 1977: ch. 3, 8).

Finally, the Toro case was another example of unreserved collaboration on the part of the king and senior chiefs with the British colonial powers. Toro was typically a client state. A 19th century offshoot of Bunyoro, its separate status would hardly have been possible other than as a deliberate act of British policy. The special bait held out to the Toro ruling elite, similar to the Ankole case, was the promise of vastly enlarged powers over people and land. In the Toro case, however, this implied and sanctioned control over the Bakonzo and Baamba peasantries living in the Ruwenzori area near the Congo border. Their incorporation into the Toro kingdom and through this into the Ugandan colonial framework remained one of the most conflict-ridden issues until well after Ugandan independence. In turn, the role and position of the kingship became a highly controversial one throughout much of Toro's official territory. Not quite without symbolic significance, therefore, one of the incidents that marked the birth of the Rwenzururu movement in 1961-62 was the arrest of Bakonzo and Baamba leaders for having called the Toro *Omukama* 'a fool' (Doornbos 1970).

The Rwenzururu Case

If these four examples seem to illustrate different modes and degrees of predictable chiefly behaviour and accommodation in political incorporation, there is yet a fifth which *prima facie* contradicts our most tentative presuppositions so far. This is the case of the Rwenzururu kingship installed in 1963 by Isaya Mukirane, leader of the secessionist Bakonzo wing of the Rwenzururu movement which had first demanded separate district status from Toro. The Bakanzo, it should be noted, have no tradition of centralised political institutions. In the first instance, Mukirane's role was by and large that of a 'Big-Man': entrepreneurial, mobilizing, and resourceful. Following the escalation of the conflict and the move to secede, the leadership was soon transformed and institutionalised, first through a kind of interim presidential arrangement, then into fulfledged kingship.

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Did this represent a belated case of evolution from 'Big-Manship' into chieftaincy and kingship, perhaps also a negation of the logic of 'Big-Man' and chief as distinct and generally immutable structural types? At a direct empirical level this might well appear to have been the case. Rwenzururu kingship was institutionalised, albeit in 'pressure cooker' style, and the institution maintained itself for nearly two decades, surviving several serious challenges and crises including even that of succession: on the death of Mukirane in 1966 his son Charles Irema-Ngoma, then still a minor, took over, thus turning the new monarchy into a hereditary institution. Considerable attention also seems to have been given to the elaboration of royal forms and styles in keeping with lacustrine culture and precedent.

Until 1982 the dual hypotheses underlying these notes — of 'Big-Man' and chief as relatively immutable types and tending to perform different roles in either collaboration or resistance — would seem to have been seriously invalidated by the Rwenzururu case. But beyond? In August 1982 the King of Rwenzururu concluded an agreement with the Uganda Government to surrender and abolish the movement in exchange for the rewards of "a bus, a personal car, a shop and money to start a new life" (*Uganda Times*, Aug. 18, 1982). His followers were likewise to receive appropriate compensation. These tangible returns, then, might be regarded either as an index of the price of kingship *anno* 1982, or as so many tokens of entrepreneurship, confirming once again that 'Big-Manship' cannot quite transmute itself into kingship.

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HENRY B. TEUNIS

THE END OF THE 'BIG-MAN': THE IMAGE OF GEOFFREY PLANTAGENÊT

Introduction

The 'Big-Man' is a leader who owes his prestige and followers to generosity (Claessen 1974: 101). The leaders of the early Middle Ages — kings, dukes, counts — were certainly 'Big-Men' (Werner 1984: 62; Duby 1973: 66-67, 109). In those centuries (roughly speaking up to the year 1000) a group of aristocrats governed the land. Neither money nor institutions operated fully. In those circumstances the main tool of the leader was to expend and in that way to delineate his position.

Historical Setting: Normandy and Anjou

During the eleventh century, however, other traits appeared in the style of governing of princes. The main reason was the growing strength of those who had been endowed. Fulco Nerra, Count of Anjou (987-1040) and William II, Duke of Normandy and King of England (1035-1087) still fell into this category of 'Big-Men' (Le Patourel 1965). King Henry I of England (1100-1135) still had the means and capability to manipulate his barons succesfully (Southern 1963: 132), but in the County of Anjou, next door, the situation was different. There the barons acquired a higher degree of independence than their colleagues in Normandy and England had. The count was able to maintain his authority only by asking for the services the lords were inclined to give him (Guillot 1980: 326). He did not, however, acquiesce. Fulco IV (le Réchin) tried to extend his influence into Brittany. His successor Fulco V (1109-1129) became King of Jerusalem and he had his son, Geoffrey, married to the daughter of King Henry I, Mathilde. From the Anglo-Norman point of view this was a prudent move. King Henry I did not have a successor in the male line, but by the marriage a political friendship was concluded with neighbouring Anjou: the successor to the Count of Anjou was seen as an indispensable aid to the daughter as well as a father to the grandson he hoped for. From the Angevin point of view the marriage arrangement was a triumph (Le Patourel 1965: 291). The dynasty proved that it was still counted among the most important families of kings, dukes and counts, and there was a good chance that

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further gains could be made from the newly created connections with the Norman ducal family. An alliance and kinship with this dynasty could be profitable in many ways. In this respect Fulco V proved himself of sound judgement. His grandson Henry (II) ruled over an empire that reached from the Pyrenees to the Scottish border.

This development warns us, dazzled by the new techniques of government of the age, against underestimating the strength of the 'Big-Man' in the 12th century. This age was not as modern as it often appears in the descriptions of historians. Surely, it was often an urgent need for rulers to reach a consensus. Henry I ordered all his barons before he died to swear fidelity to Mathilde. Louis VI, King of France, looked for legitimation in hereditary law (Lewis 1981: 52-53) and the protection of churches. An efficient administration of their own possessions was necessary in order to profit as much as possible from economic growth. The princes were not blind in this respect (Werner 1968: 200), but the history of the Angevin dynasty in the 12th century proves that the highest position could still be attained by territorial gain in the old-fashioned way: with a family policy of favouring the lords of the area in which they wanted to intrude, complemented with the favouring of other followers. In this craft the whole body of the Angevin comital family had exhibited a striking mastery for several generations. Fulco the Good (d. 960) obtained the County of Nantes by marrying the widow of the Count. Geoffrey Greymantle obtained the County of Châlons in the same way. Fulco Nerra, too, used his family relations ingeniously (Bachrach 1976). His successor Geoffrey Martel married the widow of William the Great, Count of Poitou and Duke of Aquitaine, and by this means ruled those areas, waiting for a son. Fulco IV obtained the County of Maine by his marriage, and Fulco V married the heiress of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The marriage of Geoffrey Plantagenêt and Mathilde was entirely consonant with this behaviour, as was of course the marriage of their son Henry (II) and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Geoffrey Plantagenêt

Orderic Vitalis, the famous Norman historian writing in the first half of the twelfth century, tells us that Geoffrey Plantagenêt wished to share the profits of his campaign in 1136 with a multitude of followers. He took with him William, Count of Poitou, Geoffrey of Vendôme, William of Nevers, William of Ponthieu. "These and many other military leaders with their forces were allied with the Angevins, and descended on the Normans, committing every kind of atrocity either out of loyalty to their prince or out of greed for plunder" (Orderic Vitalis 1978: 466). The

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Norman aristocracy was divided from the beginning. If the Normans are united, so Orderic Vitalis says, they are invincible, as they proved to be in England, Apulia and Syria. But they lacked an undisputed leader at the moment, and when Geoffrey and Mathilde appeared to be successful, one baron after another joined their party (Orderic Vitalis 1978: 546-550). The historian Robert of Torigni says that for Geoffrey to attain this success it was necessary to distribute properties: "in this way they (i.e. the Normans) could be made more inclined to give him support in the subjection of the county" (Robert of Torigny 1889: 169).

Here we see a man operating the way a 'Big-Man' had done for centuries. The aristocracy in the province to be conquered would be divided. The future conqueror promised material goods to one party and with their help he could be victorious. All his followers — from his homeland as well as from the conquered area — hoped to be endowed afterwards at the cost of others. This was the way in which Geoffrey Plantagenêt operated. He did not, I must say, meet those expectations to the extent they hoped for, and this was already a token that times were changing. In any case Orderic Vitalis did not welcome the Angevin take-over. To him it was a victory of uninvited foreigners. The Angevins were in his eyes '*Deo et hominibus abominabiles*' (Orderic Vitalis 1978: 470).

Although there are not many negative accounts of the way in which early medieval 'Big-Men' operated (they took care to extinguish those voices themselves), Geoffrey Plantagenêt is depicted in black colours in sources from several camps opposed to him. On one of his expeditions he did not spare the church of Lisieux, and that was the reason for a sharp reprimand by Bernard of Clairvaux: '*Malleus bonorum, oppressor pacis et libertatis Ecclesiae*' (hammer of the good, oppressor of the peace and liberty of the church) (Bernard of Clairvaux 1862: PL. 182 c. 552). When the Pope was unable to change the mind of Geoffrey's and Mathilde's opposition in England, Geoffrey prohibited the Pope or his legate from entering his territories — John of Salisbury related it with criticism (John of Salisbury 1956: 44) The advisor and close friend of King Louis VI, Suger, calls the bond Geoffrey-Mathilde an act of perfidy (Suger 1964: 196).

I do not want to suggest that Geoffrey Plantagenêt generally had a bad reputation in his own time. Chartrou (1928: 78-79) mentions several glorifying statements. According to these he was a brilliant strategist and quite a figure in courtly circles. His son Henry II was the heir of his policy and of the culture in which his father had raised him. He regarded the building of his empire as a family-undertaking. 'Henry's long-range plan seems to have been to concede the formal French suzerainty over his

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continental lands while at the same time uniting them by means of a family pyramid of authority' (Hollister 1976: 239). It was, however, not his intention to bring about one integrated empire (Hollister and Keefe 1973: 15). Every region was allowed to keep its own rules and leading figures. This was not supposed to mean that the aristocracy was allowed to split up into rival groups. On the contrary, the aristocrats had to be tied by loyalty to the family of Henry II. This family itself could not belong to one faction or the other. The best policy was to be in touch with the aristocracies of each region, directly or indirectly, in a positive way. This necessity of cultivating good relations with personalities and groups with diverging interests was a ground for Henry to stimulate the development of a culture at his court, which was super-regional. There, the same manners should rule the groups chasing their own interests; the same — positive — feelings regarding the Dukes of Normandy and their history should be shared. In this circle there was no place for conquerors and conquered, triumphant 'Big-Men' and groups who had to put up with a regime imposed on them. The negative image of the father of Henry II, Geoffrey Plantagenêt, had to be wiped out. In the *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*, which was written between 1170 and 1180 by order of Henry II (Tyson 1979: 197), Geoffrey was described in this way (Benoît 1954: r. 44.021-44.023):

> grant chevalier e fort e bel
> E proz e sage e conqueranz
> Prince n'estoit unz plus vaillanz.

The negative Norman image of Geoffrey Plantagenêt had been replaced by a smooth picture of a court personality, who was a great knight, strong and handsome, thoughtful, wise and brave as nobody else was.

Concluding Remarks

This was, I dare to say, the end of the 'Big-Man' in the European Middle Ages. Geoffrey Plantagenêt still had the traits of a 'Big-Man', but they faded away in the culture of the courts. Kingship became an institution above all parties and lost the character of a personal leadership. Followers were largely paid for in the second half of the twelfth century. At the king's court all persons and parties met. The image of the father of the great governor, King Henry II, had to be adapted to these changing circumstances.

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RAYMOND TH. J. BUVE

THE 'BIG-MAN' AND HIS SMALL POWERDOMAIN: THE RISE AND FALL OF A VILLAGE CACIQUE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SPAIN[1]

As far as I know there still does not exist a generally accepted definition of *caciquismo*. The patterns it follows may differ from region to region. However, strong local power of a personalist type seems to be one of its basic characteristics, together with its quality of being interlocked with other local boss systems in a wider system of oligarchical politics (Kern and Dolkart 1973). It seems likely, therefore, that a cacique is also a 'Big-Man' in terms of his local power and prestige. The reverse is, however, not so evident. 'Big-Men' becoming *caciques* seems to be a phenomenon closely associated with the attempts of the nascent modern state to penetrate into the hinterland and down to the grassroots. Local 'Big-Men' may turn into caciques as soon as they begin to grasp the possibilities for maintenance or even increase of personal power and control offered to them by regional or national elites who, still lacking direct and effective power at the grassroots, intent to use the 'Big-Man's' local power capabilities to further their supra-local interests.

It is highly likely that the phenomenon of the 'Big-Man' already existed in local Iberian societies long before they evolved or merged into larger political entities and, finally, the national state. Far more recent is the connection of the phenomenon of the 'Big-Man' to *caciquismo*. In Spain *caciquismo* and the use of local 'Big-Man', their power capabilities and prestige in oligarchical systems of politics reached their culmination during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of this century. Their ascendancy and strong development seem to be due to the specific conditions of political and socio-economic development of Spain since the fifteenth century.

Like England and France, Spain witnessed during that century the fierce struggle between local vested interests and still strong feudal traditions on the one hand, and the early royal attempts to create a modern state in terms of bureaucratic rationalisation and reinforcement of central power on the other hand. In the case of Spain, however, political centralisation and mercantile economic development were to be seriously impaired by the demise of Spain as a European power and its progressive failure to invest the profits of the exploitation of its American colonies in

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the development of the peninsular economy. Inflation provoked by the influx of precious metals and the corresponding decline of industry, commerce and market-oriented agriculture, resulted in an economy with pronounced parasitical characteristics. With commercial and industrial interests on the decline, public office became one of the few remaining options for entrepreneurship or at least for making a living not based on manual labour. At the same time, however, inflation and European wars seriously depleted the royal coffers and, for that matter, the capacity of the Spanish Crown to maintain the bureaucracy it needed for its cherished implementation of centralised power. For centuries remuneration of officials lagged behind the level of inflation and the office often had to be purchased. No wonder many holders of public office tended to consider the executive privilege which went with the office as a potential source of wealth and the corresponding district as their private estate. Royal decree may have been formally obeyed, *de facto* it was quite often ignored, since holders of public office tended to ally themselves with vested local interests. Relations based on mutual agreement and sometimes of a clientelist nature guaranteed partners, patrons and clients, a potential for the accumulation of wealth. Among those who entered office we find an increasing number of people from lower ranks. The absentee-requirements of Spain's imperial administration and warfare exhausted the human resources of the upper classes. The administration of their home domains was increasingly taken over by supervisors, notaries or local independent landowners who sought to consolidate and improve their new position and power by seeking office.

Nineteenth century efforts to install constitutional government and parliamentary democracy in Spain never went beyond the stage of well intentioned but futile attempts of idealistic minority groups. After decades of dictatorship, civil wars and a short lived republic characterised by chaos, various factions of the Spanish oligarchy finally agreed upon the need for political stability in order to promote their industrial and agricultural interests. The Conservative leader Cánovas del Castillo and his Liberal counterpart Sagasta laid the foundations for the *al turno* system. The contradictory interests of regional oligarchies had to be reconciled in an institutionalised system for the 'fair' distribution of the spoils of government. In order to guarantee this the main factions of oligarchy would alternate in power and see to the fact that local power-domains would serve the national purpose of stability and alternation in power. *Caciquismo*, which had already evolved into a major guarantee for political control and oligarchical interests at the local or regional level, now widened its span and scope in the service of this new national level interests in stability. The local 'Big-Man' now had to serve the electoral

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interests of the parties involved in the national *al turno* system. Those who consented in being co-opted in the system soon formed the base line of an extensive and intricate national network of political patronage. In exchange for keeping order and seeing to the election of the 'agreed upon' candidates for the municipal council, the provincial council and the national Cortes, the oligarchical system of politics recognized the *de facto* autonomy of the power domains of local 'Big-Men' who, as *caciques*, interlocked and hierarchically ordered, formed the basis of the national political infra-structure.

By the end of last century local 'Big-Men' appointed *alcaldes*, controlled municipal councils, and judicial and fiscal authorities. For their friends this implied an assured success in litigation and tax exemption, for their enemies the reverse. In the large Andalusian municipalities dominated by *latifundia* economic power was mostly in the hands of estate owners. The administrator of the estate, the local priest, the notary or the municipal secretary, often the only individuals with a professional education, were at best the executive arms of the real 'Big-Man' who would live in the city. In the Castilian plains and mountains, however, small and communal landownership prevailed. Under these circumstances the 'Big-Men' to be were those who had been able to monopolise access to capital or the market, and the revenues yielded by communal or municipal lands. The merchant and moneylender quite often collaborated with the local representatives of the *al turno* system, the municipal secretary in particular, and both enjoyed the judicial and fiscal immunities involved.

When anarchist and socialist ideas began to spread into the countryside, and low status intellectuals like schoolteachers became infected with the ideal of a republican democracy, the maintenance of exclusive political control required a gradual stepping up of manipulation and repression. The abolition of the monarchy (1931) and the strong promotion of constitutional rights, communication and education by the governments of the Spanish Republic, constituted serious threats to the exclusive powerdomains of the local 'Big-Men'. Road construction, primary schools, socialist teachers and the proliferation of political and syndical organisations in rural areas met during the republican years (1931-1936) with stubborn and often effective resistence of local 'Big-Men'. In republican dominated areas the Civil War (1936-1939) often implied the physical elimination of local 'Big-Men' and their clients, but in the areas soon dominated by Franco's Nationalist troops local powerdomains often survived and helped to establish *franquista* law and order. However, with the establishment of the *franquista* authoritarian State the local 'Big-Man' lost his major *raison d'être* in the eyes of the

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central government. Since there were no elections to be controlled the 'Big-Man's' role as a *cacique* became redundant. Moreover, the army, the Guardia Civil and the monolithic powerstructure of Franco Spain established direct political control at the grassroots more than ever before. As long as the 'Big-Man' remained within the narrow confines of *franquista* law and order he was allowed to continue as a secondary instrument of control, especially in the more isolated regions of the country. When the Franco régime started its policy of economic modernisation during the nineteenfifties even these pockets of *caciquismo* tended to wither away.

One of the isolated pockets where the 'Big-Men' were able to maintain their small powerdomains up to the nineteenfifties were the rather isolated side valleys of the higher sierras which constitute the dividing mountain system between the basin of the Tagus river and the Castilian upland plains. One of these *sierras* is the *Sierra de Gredos*. Most of the villages in the *Sierra de Gredos* are quite small and dispersed. Up to the nineteen sixties communications were difficult and many villages, especially those up in the mountains, were fairly closed, local systems. Most of the agricultural land at the bottom of the valleys was family property, but centuries old patterns of inheritance and tenure systems had resulted in a rather extreme *minifundia* situation. This was especially the case with the irrigated plots and gardens along the rivers. Around 1960 75% of the rural cultivators only owned up to five hectares divided in five, ten or even twenty tiny plots dispersed over the valley. They were used for the cultivation of wheat, potatoes, beans and other vegetables. About half the plots were irrigated. Agricultural lands constituted, however, only one fifth of the area. Most of the land in the Gredos was *monte*, mountain pastures owned by the municipalities, by associations of local and often well-to-do peasants or by absentee landowners. Possibilities for sheep and cattle raising therefore often depended on a peasant's relations with the municipal council, village-associations or the private owners of pastures. Forest reserves had been seriously depleted by the nineteen sixties. The central government forced private owners and municipal councils to reforestation projects on the higher slopes of the Gredos mountains. In the side valleys and cauldrons of the *Sierra de Gredos* with their often steep slopes, agriculture was and still is, hazardous. Floods could ruin a peasant's tiny plots. One or two bad harvests in succession, and problems in acquiring suitable access to pastures for his flock or a plague could easily bring him to the brink of disaster.

Many peasants in these upper valleys of the Gredos were barely able to squeeze a living out of their tiny plots and small flocks and they became more and more dependent on rich peasants who controlled the municipal

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council or the associations, often in connivance with merchants and other controlling outsiders. Among those who succeeded in acquiring control over the access to pastures and water or advanced money on the crops and flock to the already endebted peasants, we find the village 'Big-Man' and *cacique* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A village-level power domain in the Gredos mountains was not only based on sheer economic and political power, but also on successful attempts at monopolising the relations of the village to the outside world and the indispensable knowledge of how to deal with that world. A merchant-moneylender or a rich peasant needed the services of somebody who did have some knowledge of the complex and puzzling Spanish law systems and bureaucratic procedures, somebody who seemed well acquainted with the authorities and, for that matter, had proved ability to protect the interests of his friends. Quite often the municipal secretary was the only person who combined these qualities up to a certain degree. His rather privileged position as an intermediary between local vested interests and the national political framework and bureaucracy can be explained, not only by his virtual local monopoly of professional schooling, among a large majority of illiterates, but also by the agelong ignorance, suspicion and distrust of rural Spain with regard to its controlling outsiders: the government, merchants, landowners and their nearest representatives.

On the one hand we have the *patria chica*, the geographic isolation and the rather tight-knit social life of the Castilian mountain communities known for their exclusivism and strong community-bound loyalties. On the other hand we have the traditional corruption, extortion and favoritism in the implementation of the law which kept the peasants' suspicion towards officialdom alive. Moreover, the usual rural habits of cheating tax-collectors or getting around the implementation of the law made the local peasantry vulnerable to manipulation by the man 'who knew about it', the municipal secretary.

Let us illustrate the career of a local 'Big-Man' and *cacique* with the example of Don Jaime who controlled three small municipalities located in a dead-end valley of the *Sierra de Gredos*. The valley was surrounded by mountains up to 2300 m. Apart from steep trails over the mountain ridges into the adjacent valleys, the only communication with the outside world was a winding dirt road from Las Navas, the major village in the valley, to the district town of El Barco on the river Tormes.

At the end of the nineteenth century Don Jaime's father held the post of municipal secretary of Las Navas. He was well bedded in the lower echelon of national *caciquismo* and had always taken care to cultivate his relations with the Deputies and the civil government in the provincial

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capital of Avila. He gradually succeeded in becoming the merchant and major moneylender of Las Navas. In connivance with several rich peasants he controlled the economic life of the village and his detailed knowledge of the village social life, quarrels about inheritance or individual trespassing of law and order made his position virtually unassailable. He was able to run the municipality as his private estate, using most of the public funds, the annual payments of fees for pasture rights on municipal lands, to further the interests of his own family in agriculture, local commerce, money-lending, acquisition of land and control of water rights. A few years before his death at the end of the nineteen twenties, Don Jaime's father succeeded in having his son Jaime appointed as municipal secretary of the two other municipalities in the valley. After his father's death Don Jaime proved quite capable in taking over his father's network of clientelistic political ties to the provincial capital of Avila and to Madrid. His usefulness in local political control finally brought him an even larger powerdomain. He succeeded in having his brother, Don Lucas, appointed as the successor of his father as the municipal secretary of Las Navas. The family now had political control of the valley and Don Jaime soon made it clear that he was the most powerful member of the family, the real 'Big-Man'. After a few years it became clear that Don Lucas only served as an executive puppet to run the municipal affairs of Las Navas on behalf of his brother.

Don Jaime's use of the municipal secretariat of the three villages was a classical example of the abuse of public office and the status involved for personal profit.

The rules of inheritance (equal repartition of the patrimony among descendants), the complex rules of the irrigation system and the vested interests of associations of peasants and municipal councils in the large tracts of pastures made villages like Las Navas quite vulnerable to protracted conflicts. In the case of Las Navas, however, the local parties in conflict were virtually obliged to accept as their intermediary Don Jaime, the one person who had been able to reach a level of personal power and authority which made parties comply with his verdict. Although Don Jaime did not have the degree nor the formal recognition as a lawyer he succeeded in monopolising the services villagers needed in order to comply with the legal and administrative requirements of the State. When the head of a family was dying, his relatives asked Don Jaime to formulate his last will. For his services Don Jaime sometimes asked an amount in cash, but he preferred to settle the delicate problem of inheritance in exchange for an irrigated plot. In fact, during his forty years in local power Don Jaime inherited from nearly all the villagers of Las Navas.

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In cases of conflict Don Jaime offered his services to both parties involved, he fomented the conflict and at the same time tried to keep it within boundaries. He saw to it that neither of the parties came out as the winner and that both lost something, which, in cash or in kind, furthered the interest of Don Jaime. Since neither party became the clear loser, Don Jaime soon had the reputation of being a *ganapleitos*, somebody who is able to win a litigation or, at least, reach an acceptable compromise. In short, Don Jaime was able to force the villagers to accept him as their intermediary in necessary procedures which involved the provincial executive and judicial authorities. He formulated every petition or official document. He was the only and exclusive arbiter in the many local conflicts between peasant families over inheritance, boundaries of properties, and quarrels over irrigation rights, grazing rights and flocks. His deliberate and carefully calculated intervention in conflicts at the family level probably provided Don Jaime with a major source of income, property and prestige.

Local arbitration was certainly not the only source of revenue for Don Jaime, but it gave him the opportunity to alienate and obtain resources he could not get hold of otherwise. In the end it brought him to ownership of the mill, the small hydro-electric station, which supplied the valley with electricity, and a monopoly in the local wool trade.

Don Jaime's maxim was '*Divide et impera in splendid isolation*' and he clearly recognised that the success of the first part of it depended to a considerable degree on the second part, the condition of isolation.

The Republican years (1931-1936) threatened the splendid isolation of Las Navas, but Don Jaime was able to survive the foundation of an elementary school, the construction of a road and a republican *alcalde* who dared to speak out against him. No wonder Don Jaime became a staunch partisan of the Nationalist movement. When Franco's troops passed through the valley, Don Jaime's political enemies were quickly dealt with and for many years Don Jaime's policy at the village level coincided with that of the Franco régime. As long as the *franquista* government gave absolute preference to law and order, and tried to keep Spain in spiritual isolation, Don Jaime's isolationist policies at the village level seemed *de facto* endorsed by the government because Don Jaime kept 'strange' ideas out of Las Navas. During the nineteen forties and fifties he controlled the local post office, he possessed the only radio receiver in the village, was always well informed about people's whereabouts and he cultivated excellent relations with the Guardia Civil, the rural police which patrolled the dirt road to the district town and the mountain trails. Until the late nineteen fiftees Don Jaime had always been able to convince the few inhabitants who could have afforded to buy

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a radio or subscribe to a newspaper, that it had no sense to do so. Communication with Las Navas remained firmly in the hands of Don Jaime.

Around 1960, however, Don Jaime was confronted with serious maintenance problems regarding his exclusive local powerdomain. First of all, his brother Lucas, the municipal secretary of Las Navas, died. Don Jaime solved the problem for a few months by dispatching documents and correspondence in the name of his brother.

The cover blew when Don Lucas' wife asked the provincial government in Avila for her widow's pension. An official inquiry in Las Navas led to the immediate appointment of a new municipal secretary. For the moment Don Jaime had to give in, but within a few months he succeeded in implicating the young and inexperienced secretary in a case of administrative fraud. The son of a widow in Las Navas, and a client of Don Jaime, asked the new secretary for a certificate of poverty in order to obtain exemption from military service because his poor mother could not manage without her son's financial support. The young secretary asked the advice of Don Jaime who immediately confirmed the straitened circumstances of the family, although he perfectly knew that the widow in question was rather well-to-do ... After the secretary had issued the certificate Don Jaime furtively denounced him before the provincial authorities in Avila and made it clear to the young secretary that he expected unconditional loyalty to Don Jaime's interests in Las Navas. Although Don Jaime had succeeded in restoring his control over the municipal office, at least for the time being, he was unable to keep the village in splendid isolation during the early nineteen-sixties when the Spanish government began to push industrialisation and when modernisation entered the side valleys of the Gredos mountains.

After a litigation of several years Don Jaime finally lost control over the supply of electricity to the village and Las Navas at last became connected to a major network which had already supplied the other villages of the valley for more than a decade. In that same year the village got its first telephone, the dirt road was paved and for the first time a pupil of the village school went to a secondary school in Avila. Don Jaime's progressive loss of power and influence in an ever widening local world induced a group of peasants to denounce Don Jaime before the provincial government in Avila. Don Jaime was accused of fiscal and administrative fraud. This time, however, he seemed to have lost his lifelong immunity and he was stripped of his remaining political and administrative control of village affairs. He remained, however, the merchant-moneylender of the village and those who were endebted to him had no choice but to remain loyal. In spite of this, his image as the 'Big-Man' had been irrevocably tarnished. Even the local priest, after

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twenty years of silence, suddenly depicted Don Jaime as a relic of the past. A few days before he died in his late seventies, several villagers began to shout in front of his house that he had ceased to be a 'Big-Man', even ceased to be a man, because he had no sons ...

NOTE

1 I want to express my indebtedness and gratitude to the students of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies of Leiden University who helped me to gather the information in the field, twenty years ago, and to Francisco Carrasquer who helped me to grasp some of the complexities of Spanish history and society. The names of the village and the main actors involved are fictitious.

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HELEEN LOUWE

POLICE INFORMERS: 'BIG-MEN' FAILING THEIR FOLLOWERS

Introduction

In discussions on 'Big-Men' systems the spotlights are usually on the 'Big-Men' themselves. Their followers get less attention. In this chapter the situation is reverse. It deals with the question, why would a follower of a 'Big-Man' in organised crime give information to the police leading to the arrest of a man who provides for his source of income and safety?

A recent newspaper article brought up this question. Early in April 1984, some 80 persons, mostly of Italian origin were arrested in Italy, Spain and the United States, on suspicion of involvement in organised illegal drug traffic. Direct cause of these arrests was a large-scale heroin connection ($ 1,6 billion annually), from North Africa, through Western Europe into the United States. Among the convicted was Don Gaetano Badalamenti. His arrest was considered of main importance by the FBI (De Volkskrant dd. April 2, 1984).

Badalamenti was born into a 'crime family' in Sicily. During his life he became an influential member of a family that controlled crime in Cinici, near Palermo. For his recognised authority he was acknowledged the title of *Don*. A *Don* provides for the source of income of his 'family' by controlling crime in a certain area. He protects the members of his 'family' against the risks resulting from illegal money making. In the area surrounding Palermo several families constantly waged war over the control of illegal drug traffic, through the airport of Punta Raisa, in Sicily. The Badalamenti family eventually lost this war to the crime family of the Corleones.

Badalamenti, 62 years old when he was arrested, spent several years of his early manhood with a Detroit crime family. From this period dates his personal relation with members of organised crime in the United States. Members of the Badalamenti family in Italy transported 750 kilos of heroin annually to family members in the United States. Pizza restaurants, owned by members of the family, were used as legal fronts to cover the distribution of the heroin. In New York a crime family led by Salvatore Catalano, member of the once powerful Bonnana family, received the heroin and took care of the final distribution to the sellers.

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This smuggle line is known as the 'Pizza Connection' or the 'Sicilian Connection'.

The arrest of Badalamenti and others involved in this case became possible after a member of Badalamenti's own family in the United States turned informer to the FBI (De Volkskrant, April 13, 1984). Indeed, the most striking fact from this newspaper report is that the informer stems from Badalamenti's own family.

Since illegal actions to raise money are the base for the organisation of a crime family, betrayal to the police is a risk for all members. 'Dons' deal most effectively with such a risk: the penalty for this offence is death.

Why would anyone knowingly take such a risk?

Social Structure in Organised Crime

The *Mafia* as a concept, is almost synonymous with organised crime of any type. Originally, however, the term was used to refer to a network of people in the neighbourhood of Palermo, Sicily, who were engaged in a certain type of organised crime, namely extortion (Servadio 1977). Networks of people engaged in this type of organised crime can be found all over the world. In the United States, such a network of interrelated crime-groups, dominated by people of Italian origin, is called the Cosa Nostra (Servadio 1977: 70).

The overall network is divided into organised groups, controlling crime in a certain area. Members of such a crime-group are very often, although not necessarily, ethnically or genealogically related. For matters of convenience the term 'family' is used in this article to indicate the sub-groups in organised crime. 'Families' are interrelated through rivalry for control over crime.

Illegal money making is the main motive in organised crime. 'Families' are engaged in gambling, racketeering, extortion, swindling, robbery and smuggling. 'Families' fight each other for control over these sources of income. A fight that is regulated according to certain rules, at least in the Cosa Nostra of the United States (Servadio 1977: 70).

Threats inherent to illegal money making are basic to the social structure of a crime family. Individuals that engage in illegal actions to obtain a living, are unprotected in several respects: they are pursued by police and justice, their income may fluctuate and their lives are at risk in the fight between themselves over their source of income. Since their actions to obtain a living are illegal they cannot apply for legal protection. It is within the shelter of the 'family' that individuals find protection against the threats inherent to illegal money making. In a crime family the same threats (rivalry and arrest) are at stake, but to a lesser extent.

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Basically crime families are egalitarian. Yet, the relations between its members are asymmetric: some members acquire more power than others within the 'family'. In order to obtain power, they have invested money, through gifts and bribery, to create relationships with individuals highly ranked in the occupational fields of legal business, police, justice and politics. Through these connections an influential man succeeds in providing for and guaranteeing a source of income to the 'family'. An influential man in crime provides protection against the risks of illegal money making, as a benefit to individuals who are members of his 'family'. In return for the favor of protected employment in crime, family members are obliged to pay respect and complete obedience to this influential man. He also demands a share in their profits made from crime.

Such an influential person dealing with employment in illegal money making may be called a 'Big-Man'. At least he shows resemblances to the classical description of Melanesian political leaders by Sahlins (1963: 289): men that reach a position of authority by means of personal power.

A 'Big-Man' in organised crime acquires a position of influence in the world of crime, by manipulating his connections in legal society. As it has been stated, the 'Big-Man's' base of power is the provision of protection against the risks of illegal money making. He acquires a position of dominance over individuals, by manipulating the loyalties of the members of his family, by means of which he can reign over life and death. The obedience that family members owe him is his source of power.

A 'Big-Man' in organised crime, referred to as 'Don' in Italy or 'Boss' in the United States can render efficient protection to individuals of his 'family' as long as he maintains his base of power. Protection is based on violence, carried out by individuals at the 'Big-Man's' command.

Family members are protected against the risks of rivalry. Goods made from crime and money investments are fully protected. Family members laying hands on goods or money belonging to other family members without authorisation are threatened with violence.

Protection against the police is guaranteed by the code of absolute silence about members and methods used in organised crime. Family members who are too talkative concerning the whereabouts of fellow members, meet with violence. Family members turning informers to the police are killed. Individuals accidently witnessing a crime are hushed with money, violence and, if necessary, murder.

A 'Big-Man' — for his own protection — must be able to count on the loyalty of his family members. Family members are obliged to report to

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their 'Big-Man' any action that can be considered harmful to the interests of the family. Violation of this custom is met with physical force. Treacherous members and members who more than once violate the interests of their family are killed.

Since positions of influence in organised crime are open to any individual, a constant competition goes on between ambitious men. This competition results in the hierarchical structure of a 'family'.

Police Informers: a Matter of Failed Reciprocity?

Individuals turning to the police with evidence against people involved in illegal actions can be called informers. A distinction has to be made between:

— outsiders, persons who have accidentally witnessed a crime and also undercover agents from the police who infiltrate a family to gather evidence against their members.
— insiders, people possessing information about actions and members in crime because of their membership of a 'family'.

Insiders can turn with evidence to the police against members of their own family or against members of other families.

This chapter will be restricted to insiders that turn against their own family members. They may be considered as biting the hand by which, once, they were fed.

Servadio, in his analysis of the Italian mafia suggests that a 'family' member will turn informer to the police when his rightful demands for protection are not met (Servadio 1977: 244). In my opinion this hypothesis — although plausible — needs specification.

A 'Big-Man' in organised crime depends on the loyalty of his family members for rendering efficient protection. Loyalty is governed by violence. Once a 'Big-Man' lacks the loyalty of his 'family' members, for whatever reason, his power declines. In such a situation 'family members' might turn informer to the police.

Loyalty is governed by violence in organised crime. But violence looses its effectiveness to command loyalty once a person is threatened with death by the family. A family member threatened to be killed will be disloyal when it serves his goals to remain alive. Failed reciprocity as a motive for a 'family' member to become police informer can be expected when:

— the 'Big-Man's' power declines
— the death penalty is made known.

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Searching Evidence

It is difficult to find recent data to support the hypothesis suggested in the previous paragraph. Silence is an important code in organised crime. Nevertheless, two relatively well documented autobiographic accounts of 'family members' turning informer to the police are available. One is the account of Vincent Tereza, a member of a Cosa Nostra family in the area of New Jersey. A 'family' led, at that time, by Patriarca as Boss and Tameleo as his underboss (Renner 1974). The other account is of Joe Valachi, member of another New Jersey crime family, led by the Boss Vito Genovese (Maas 1968).

Valachi's account won't serve as a case. His motives to become police informer are similar to those of Barboza (see below). Vito Genovese has ordered his death. Valachi has been an opportunistic family member and he is suspected to leak information to the police. ''I was given the kiss of death by Vito'', as Valachi pathetically states (Maas 1968), meaning his killing is ordered. As a result Valachi turns to the police with information in return for protection, only after he realises that death is cursed upon him (Maas 1968). He dies a natural death, protected in the federal penitentiary, La Luna, in Texas (Renner 1974: 224).

The account as told by Vincent Tereza is a source of information for the cases of Barboza and Tereza in the following paragraphs.

Barboza's Story

In the early sixties Raymona Patriarca is the most powerful and influential man in a New Jersey crime family. When one of his family members, a violent and uncontrollable man, named Barboza, is indicted, Patriarca intends to bail him out. However, he is ordered not to do so by an attorney, who is untouchable, implying that Patriarca needs this man's services.

Barboza's partners make an effort to raise the bail, which is high. Shaking down nightclubs and gambling houses they provoke hostilities of other family members. As a result they are killed. One of the killers, a member of Patriarca's 'family' is caught and since the police has proven evidence against him, he is told to plead guilty. Patriarca will use his influence to make for a lighter sentence. This plan, however, fails. The man has to serve a long term sentence.

Barboza, still in jail, receiving information on this affair, feels unprotected. He is not bailed out by Patriarca, and his partners who have attempted to raise his bail are killed by members of the 'family' that is supposed to protect him. He threatens to kill several family members and he insults Patriarca.

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As a result of his behaviour towards the 'family' and the family 'Boss', his killing is ordered. Information about the death sentence reaches Barboza, who is thrown with his back to the wall. In order to find protection he must turn to the police or try to find release for the death sentence.

He mails a letter to Patriarca, pleading for his life. He apologises for his behaviour and offers to withdraw from the crime-scene and not to cause any further trouble to his 'Boss'. Patriarca, feeling greatly offended by Barboza's insults does not want to accept his excuses. For reasons of personal revenge he wants Barboza to agonise. Therefore Barboza is told that his proposal has been rejected. He will be killed. Patriarca's revenge turns out to be a strategic error.

Barboza turns informer to the police. He testifies in trials with evidence against 'family' members in return for the guarantee that his life will be protected from the hostilities of the 'family' by the police. As a result of his testimonies the underboss of the New Jersey 'family', Tameleo, is convicted.

Consequently, Patriarca faces serious disaster. Another matter becomes important in this respect. For several years already an electronic bug, placed in Patriarca's office by the FBI has recorded all his conversations. As a result, a family member stands trial for tax evasion. This man does not believe that Patriarca's office is taped, so during the trial he insists that the tapes are made public. His insistence to produce the tapes is against all orders given by Patriarca. The tapes are brought up in court and, because of the publicity, Patriarca looses his influence. This 'family' member, after having served his sentence, is killed as soon as he is out of jail. Patriarca himself, as a result of his declining power, is sentenced to five years of imprisonment.

Another Case

With two 'Bosses' behind bars the New Jersey 'family' becomes a limbo. Family members are stealing from one another and standing trial against each other.

Vincent Tereza, a member of the New Jersey 'family', under direct protection of Patriarca and Tameleo is well aware of his unprotected position. He is indicted for swindle several times. As soon as he has bailed himself out he is back in swindle again. He deals in stolen securities to pay off the fees for legal aid and the bails. Because the amounts of bail are high he runs short of money. During his indictments his wife is not supported financially, as would have been the case under the reign of Patriarca. Even worse is the loss of the money he raised in

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his swindle practices. His partners fled with the booty. A fact that would have been unheard of with Patriarca still in full power. Tereza is enraged. There is no protection of his property and no protection for his wife and children, who now endure the disadvantages of his illegal business.

During his last indictment he finds out that some 'family members' will stand trial against him; it appears to be an order from a replacing 'Boss'. At that moment he starts his negotiations with the FBI. In return for protection from the 'family' and support for his wife and children he is willing to open up evidence against 'family' members. Based on his witness over 40 convictions are made. He never witnessed against Patriarca, however.

Conclusion

Both members of the New Jersey 'family', led by Patriarca, have lost protection. The 'Boss', Patriarca, does not fulfill his obligations. Barboza as well as Tereza turn informer to the police only when they are sure they really have lost all protection. The circumstances leading to their decisions are different for each of them.

The moment Patriarca looses influence, Tereza becomes a victim to the rivalry between ambitious men striving for the top. Relations of protection are not yet settled and since Tereza's loyalty remains with Patriarca, whose influence is declining, he is an obstacle in the way of the men striving for the top. It is remarkable, however, that Tereza holds on to his refusal to testify against Patriarca. Tereza is not blaming Patriarca for the fact that his protection fails. He remains personally loyal to Patriarca, but since Patriarca has lost his power, loyalty is not of much help.

The case of Barboza is different. The motivation to become informer is obvious. He has no protection and turns to wherever he might expect some protection, using his information about the 'family' as bargain in a deal with the police. Patriarca made a strategic error. It is most unusual for a 'Big-Man' in organised crime to state a death penalty so openly. Only when he estimated his position at the top firmly established, he could do so. In Barboza's case no evidence was brought up to convict Patriarca. But a considerable number of family members were convicted.

In both cases the 'Big-Man' did not render protection. In one case he failed because his power declined, in the other case he intentionally did not render protection, overestimating his power to hush the informer by violence.

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Becoming an informer seems indeed a matter of failed reciprocity, but failed reciprocity under specific conditions.

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VICTORIA J. BAKER

RISING FROM THE PITS: SOME SRI LANKAN 'BIG-MEN' OF GEMMING

Introduction

Looming large in a small Sri Lankan village in the remote Moneragala District, the house of the successful local gem *mudalaali* (merchant) contrasts sharply with the simplicity of the surrounding wattle and daub huts. In the garage gleams a shiny red Lancer — perhaps the most intricate piece of technology for miles around. Two cars carrying local dignitaries and invited regional guests who attended a village school book-distribution ceremony, pull into *mudalaali*'s driveway. He greets the guests cordially and conducts them into his spacious pink-and-blue living room, laden with material signs of prosperity: from two large sofa-and-armchair sets to a new stereo tape-recorder. The guests are seated and treated royally. The *mudalaali* has been asked by the school to sponsor the lunch for the honoured guests of the ceremony. This the merchant does with pride and pleasure, explaining that he himself regrettably only went through second grade, but that he is eager to make his contribution to the educationists of the village and region. He is the richest man in the surrounding area and considers it normal to accept such responsibilities.

The kitchen is bustling with activity as a festive and sumptuous meal is almost ready to be served. The sponsoring of this meal is only a small-scale example of the community service asked of the *mudalaali* or offered by him. He is the 'Big-Man' of the village, who owes his relatively respected but unstable position to a combination of luck, personal ambition, entrepreneurship, and generosity. In many ways he resembles the Melanesian 'Big-Man', who has gained an established place in anthropological literature (see Sahlins 1972: 248-254 for a thorough summary).

This chapter will highlight similarities between the position and characteristics of Sri Lankan gem-merchants and the original 'Big-Men' of Melanesian monographs. Since little or no published material exists on the sociological aspects of the Sri Lankan gemming culture, the data for the present article are drawn from a comprehensive interview with a village gem merchant as well as from an extensive interview with a sociology lecturer who grew up in a gemming area and in a gemming

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family, being thereby able to contribute first-hand accounts (Karunatissa 1984). All names of people and villages are fictitious.

After a brief overview of the background and setting of the Sri Lankan gem industry, attention is focussed in the third section on the personal qualities of the gem merchants in question as well as on illustrative events in their rise to prominence (and in some cases their fall), that follow the traditional 'Big-Man' pattern. The final section summarises those aspects of the Sri Lankan gemming culture and personality, which place these nouveau-riche community benefactors — the *mudalaalis* — into an ever widening circle of inclusion labelled 'Big-Man'.

Background and Setting

Scattered between Avissawella, Kamburupitiya and Moneragala more than 7000 tripod-like gem-pits can be found, their beams jutting above the lush green of the paddy fields and tropical vegetation. In this elliptically-shaped area of about 4000 square kms., stretching from the east-central region of Sri Lanka to the south-western and south-central regions, some 80% of the country's gemming fields are found. It is from the pits in these fields that the greatest finds are made of precious and semi-precious stones — sapphires, rubies, cat's eyes, alexandrites, aquamarines, tourmalines, garnets, zircons, topazes, amethysts, moonstones and others — which make Sri Lanka one of the most important gem-bearing areas of the world.

Sri Lanka has been known for its superior gems since ancient times, precious stones having been mentioned in the Mahawamsa epic chronicle (ca. 250 B.C.) as gifts given by King Devanampiyatissa to Emperor Asoka. The Roman historian Pliny (1st c. A.D.), the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien (5th c. A.D.), Marco Polo (13th c. A.D.) and the Arab traveller Ibn Batuta (14th c. A.D.) all document the abundance of precious stones on the island and the trade with foreign merchants. In the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods of occupation, gems continued to be an important export item. During the 1950s and 1960s a great portion of Sri Lanka's gems moved out of the country through illicit channels. The miners received a very low price for their sweat in the muddy pits; the cutting and sale of the finished product was fairly confined to a few close-knit, usually Muslim families; the greatest profits were received by middlemen from outside the region, who directed the gems to smugglers' markets.

It was not until the past couple of decades that a new burgeoning class of entrepreneurs has become obvious in the gemming regions. A great deal of credit for the widespread rise of the 'nouveaux-riches' class can

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be attributed to the establishment of the State Gem Corporation in 1971, "designed to provide opportunities for the poor man to mine for gems so that a very wide section of the people would not only benefit themselves but also contribute to increasing the wealth of the country" (Budget Speech of Finance Minister 1970-1971, quoted in *Economic Review* Sept. 1977:11). This state intervention in all areas of the gemming industry has received a great deal of criticism, and illegal rings still operate on a large scale. It is not within the scope of this chapter, however, to go into the workings of the corporation or the finer mazes of the gemming industry. What is apparent, in any case, is that the Corporation strengthened the position of the miners, the newly-trained cutters and the local intermediaries by providing them with an alternative. Corporation valuers quote fair prices for gems brought to them and the real value of the gems is made known, thus giving a wider section of the population involved a chance to make a fairer deal for their labours and enterprising endeavors.

Throughout the gemming regions a sprinkling of the merchants who 'made it big' is evident. They are fast on their way as a group to form a new gemming subculture amidst the traditional Sri Lankan gemming culture. This new class is able to break age-old rules of social mobility: they create a demand for expensive consumer goods and build conspicuously rich houses in poor remote areas; and they accept responsibility for community welfare and distribution of wealth in order to maintain their new-found respected positions in society. They are the potential subject for interesting anthropological studies, which thus far are lacking on the new gemming culture. The section which follows, pointing out some 'Big-Man' qualities of the Sri Lankan gemming class similar to the Melanesian 'Big-Man' characteristics, shows merely one aspect of a fascinating culture.

The 'Big-Man' Characteristics

A. *Entrepreneurship, personal ambition, and managerial skill.* One of the commonly cited characteristics of the 'Big-Man' is his enterprising nature. He is a self-made man whose leadership is based on an achieved status in a sphere of egalitarianism. While the new Sri Lankan gem-merchants cannot be said to be political leaders, they certainly demonstrate the qualities of entrepreneurship and ambition. A few examples from the interviews will illustrate this point.

Jarwin is a successful gem *mudalaali* in the village of Kandaboda in the Moneragala District, where his father was a *chena* (swidden) cultivator. At the age of 14 he ran away from home after a beating from his father.

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With stolen money he took a bus to Matara in the South and became friendly with a trader, assisting him in the selling of dried fish, onions and potatoes at village fairs. Saving his money he came back to Kandaboda six years later and began a business transporting limes and oranges to Matara. An orange blight struck the citrus groves at about the same time that gems were found in his area. Enterprising as he was, Jarwin jumped at the chance to change from a defunct business to a booming one. He first began mining gems, selling them to buyers from Ratnapura, the Sri Lankan gem center. After acquiring enough capital in this way, he rapidly came in a position to become a broker, buying and selling gems himself.

Ranasinghe, a former cultivator of high standing, comes from the village of Gangoda, about seven miles from Ratnapura. Before 1963 not a single gem had been found in his village. In 1966 Ranasinghe decided to start digging a hole in his back yard after villagers reported finds. Months without success almost brought the search to a standstill; but at his son's encouragement, he continued to dig until he made a good job of it. He made friends with Muslim gem-buyers, and within four years he had found enough gems to buy a car and build a new house as well as to open a village shop and invest in four hectares of rubber trees.

One of the most prominent merchants in a gem center near Ratnapura is Puwak-mudalaali, who started as an errand boy in a small hotel. After becoming a trusted servant, he was sent to a gemming area where he stole a gem and sold it for a high price, thus gaining his first capital to buy more stones. Now he occupies a virtual 'palace' in the gem center and has security investments in many fields of business. His rags-to-riches story is one which many village boys dream to emulate.

Thus the gem business is bounded in a sphere of egalitarianism, open to any entrepreneur — of high or low station — who is willing to roll up his *sarong*, descend into the pits, and subsequently to enter the buying-and-selling competition which can lead to financial affluence. His success depends in part on his enterprising nature, his personal ambition and the way he manages and invests the money he gains from gemming.

B. *Calculated generosity.* If the gem *mudalaali*'s commercial success depends partly on his enterprising nature and managerial skills, then it depends for another important part on his calculated generosity in order to maintain his status and prestige in the village or town. The recognised '*mudalaali*' of the village will not attempt to keep his riches for himself (and will not be left in peace to do so by the villagers, even if he would desire it).

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Let us take Jarwin again as an example. He is called upon one to four times a month to help with things like paying for a funeral. He is frequently asked to sponsor luncheons for community functions, such as the one attended by the author. When asked about his attitude toward such community generosity, Jarwin replies that he enjoys the role: "As a human being there must be service given to one's people and country". His greatest community contribution was a Buddhist preaching hall for the village. For this he donated Rs. 100,000, "for merit", as he explains. Like most gem-merchants, he makes it a point to go to the southeast Sri Lankan town of Kataragama several times a year to pay homage to the god of the same name: the businessmen's favourite Hindu/Buddhist god.

Ranasinghe has an impressive list of generous donations for the community. Especially the *pirith* ceremonies, where Buddhist priests chant all night to invoke blessings, followed by the *daana* almsgiving-ceremonies, are large functions where Ranasinghe was able to enhance his prestige regularly by financing the occasions in a generous manner. Other merit-making (*pingkama*) ceremonies were often sponsored largely by him; and his donations of articles to be auctioned at temple fairs were far greater than those given by others. Ranasinghe's name was always high on the list of those invited to a wedding. His gift would be worth some twenty times more than the average gift, and here he could demonstrate his practical skills — reminiscent of the Melanesian 'Big-Man's' talents. From his shops the villagers had no trouble in buying things on credit, and thus they became indebted to him. Different from the traditional merchant, who took a much harder line towards debtors, Ranasinghe allowed the indebtedness to linger on as part of the calculated generosity adding to his status.

Other big gem *mudalaalis* have made their reputations of generosity throughout the island by spectacular deeds. Puwak-Mudalaali is a noted example. On the first death-anniversary of his wife, he distributed 20,000 rice-meal packages among those who needed them in the surrounding areas. In his home town he had a large memorial center with theater built, which was opened by the national President. Regarding local politics, Puwak-Mudalaali and others often play it safe by giving generous campaign contributions to all the candidates running for office. Another prestigious stunt is lending his car to the local member of parliament when the latter comes on a visit to the village.

An additional conspicuous offering by Puwak-Mudalaali was the construction of the traditional merit-making 'pandal' structure (depicting stories from Buddhist history) for the May month *Wesak* ceremonies. The famous one sponsored by him was illuminated by 20,000 bulbs. The

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public games for the Sinhala New Year festivities likewise have expensive gifts as prizes for the winners, the most conspicuous of which are frequently donated — out of popular demand — by the gem merchants.

Such glaring examples overshadow the continuous lower-level distribution in the community: food, charity and religious sponsorship, which the gem-merchant accepts as a normal and necessary part of his behaviour to maintain his achieved status.

C. *Social mobility/instability.* The modern Sri Lankan gem-merchant, starting on an egalitarian level open to all, is in a position to enjoy a sharp rise in social standing. The rise may be followed by an equally sharp decline, making his position an unstable one, again very similar to the stereotyped Melanesian 'Big-Man'. In a country where the caste system is still unofficially very much alive, a possibility for breaking caste barriers — be it yet a fairly difficult path — exists in gaining great wealth through gemming and generously distributing it throughout the community.

Jarwin is an example of the son of a simple slash-and-burn cultivator — not belonging to the highest (cultivator/*govigama*) caste, and himself only having had schooling through the second grade — who was able to rise to a very respectable position in his village because of his wealth and generosity. He understands clearly how unstable his place is, however, and how dependent he is on a combination of luck and entrepreneurship. With an already cultivated taste for luxury and a desire to have his children educated in good schools, his dream is to invest in a cardamon estate to provide a permanent income for himself and his family.

Ranasinghe has already experienced the rise and the fall from a top gemming position in the community. One of his wife's relations has his own gem pit. Little by little better finds came out of that rival pit; the profits were invested wisely and the relative gained more financial prestige. The debtors of Ranasinghe's shops stopped their conscientious efforts to pay him back, since he had fallen in status. He still suffers from a kind of addiction to gemming, but his livelihood he now owes to the four hectares of rubber trees he bought at the height of his gemming career.

An interesting story is told of a man in the same village from the lowly drummers' caste, who acquired a great deal of wealth through gemming. He built a beautiful house, bought tracts of land, had two jeeps and a car. For two or three years he had difficulty in gaining prestige because of his low caste. Then he began supporting a rather progressive political party and gained a following of village young people. Through community charity the villagers gradually started to ignore the fact that he

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was of a low caste. He entered a business venture with a person of high caste, buying a private coach together with the latter. The final proof that social barriers were broken occurred when the *mudalaali* started being invited to weddings of higher caste families, where he was often even asked to play a ceremonial role.

An additional example is that of a former rubber estate labourer of the *padu* (soldier) caste, who made fabulous sums out of gemming from the very start. One of his first deeds was to build a temple in his village for a low-caste Buddhist order, bringing a priest to this temple and promising support for him. His generous provision of relief funds when surrounding areas were inundated enhanced his social acceptance: he asked how much the older *mudalaalis* donated and then he gave ten times that amount. A sum of Rs. 35,000 for the improvement of the village school also helped to speed the social mobility, passing caste barriers. But his own personal victory was when he succeeded in hiring a high-caste driver for his luxurious car. This driver he lured away from a *govigama* merchant by offering a higher salary.

While gem *mudalaalis* have risen and fallen, instability being a stamp of their trade, the most prudent of them have not only distributed large amounts of their wealth among the community but have also invested their money in more stable branches of industry. The social mobility provided by success in gemming is paralleled by a fall down the social ladder of prestige when a luckier and more enterprising merchant pushes his way to the top, making both social mobility and instability of one's social position characteristics common to the 'Big-Men' of various walks of life.

Summary

Ever since the Melanesian self-made political figures known as 'Big-Men' gained a place in anthropological literature, thinking people have been drawing parallels with figures in other contexts who bear similar characteristics. The comparison seems to be useful for the new class of wealthy Sri Lankan gem-merchants — if for no other reason than to call attention to a fascinating group as yet unfocused upon by social scientists.

The conspicuously large and relatively new houses with gleaming automobiles parked outside, found scattered more and more frequently throughout the poor villages in the Sri Lankan gem-bearing areas, are the clue to the presence of this group of 'Big-Men'. Starting on an equal footing with one another, these self-made men — as illustrated by a few examples taken from interviews — share a number of qualities with the

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stereotyped Melanesian 'Big-Man' (and other 'Big-Men', as they have been identified by social scientists). Entrepreneurship, personal ambition and managerial skill are seen as common denominators of them all, as one must persist in the search for gems and apply the businessman's acumen to sell and buy more gems wisely after moving from miner to merchant.

Calculated generosity secures the *mudalaali* in an acceptable position in the community. As long as he shares and does not hoard his wealth to too great an extent, he holds a position of high prestige and esteem in the village. This generosity was seen to extend to spectacular give-aways, especially in the line of Buddhist merit-making traditions and community projects.

The possibility for upward social mobility due to increased wealth is inherent in the Sri Lankan gemming culture. Age-old caste barriers can even be broken in many instances. The newly attained high social position is an unstable one, however, for more successful rival gem-merchants are always lurking in the shadows. A change of luck or a decline of enterprising effort may cause a downward move as rapid as the rise.

This short article has pointed out a new area where the dynamics of the 'Big-Man's' prestigious position and the characteristics attributing to the attainment and maintenance of his position appear to be present. A cultural field yet unstudied has been brought to the fore, providing food for further inquiry into what might be called 'Gem-Stone-Age Economics'.

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FRANKLIN E. TJON SIE FAT

UPSTREET, DOWNSTREET, FRONTSTREET, BACKSTREET: THE CONTEXT OF ST. MAARTEN POLITICS

Introduction

At four o'clock in the afternoon of the second of July 1981 members of the Windward Islands Council gathered in the legislative hall of the Government Administration building in Philipsburg, St. Maarten. For this extraordinary Council meeting (chaired by the outgoing Lieutenant Governor) two important items had been placed on the agenda. First, the dedication of the legislative hall. Although the new Administration Building had itself been inaugurated exactly three years earlier, in July 1978, the Council chamber had remained unnamed. As various dignitaries and invited guests arrived, a running commentary was broadcast live from the hall by the local radio station, PJD2. The proceedings of the meeting would also be relayed by loudspeaker to members of the general public waiting in the small square outside the Administration Building. The second item on the afternoon's agenda was summarized by one of the radio reporters as "matters pertaining to thirty years in office ... of Claude Wathey".

Among the invited guests were two ministers from the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles, the Maire and Sous-Préfect of French St. Martin, a Minister representing the neighbouring islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, the Prime Minister of Anguilla, and the Consul General of the United States of America.

The meeting came to order and after a short speech by the Chairman a commemorative plaque was unveiled. Henceforth, by special resolution, the Council Chamber was to be known as the 'Claude Wathey Legislative Hall'. With the first item on the agenda settled, the meeting then turned to the second, related point. Council members, the member of Parliament for the Windward Islands, a Government minister, and representatives from other Caribbean islands and the United States rose in turn to address the Council. With only a few exceptions the speakers paid lavish tribute to the man who had held office for thirty consecutive years and whose name had been inscribed on the commemorative plaque: Council Member and Island Commissioner Claude Wathey. Acknowledging the honour paid him, the Commissioner proceeded to sum up his political achievements of the past three decades. The meeting

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closed at a quarter to six. The only incident marring the perfection of the carefully orchestrated ceremony had occurred at the beginning. The incoming mail read out at the opening of the meeting included one item the contents of which were in sharp contrast with the many messages of congratulations. This was the telegram submitted by the youngest opposition party, the St. Maarten Patriotic Movement (SPM), protesting the "attempts to mislead the Island Council ... since the original reason for the Island Council to observe thirty years since its institution have seemingly been forgotten". The two members of the SPM fraction also boycotted the entire proceedings.

The incident is significant. As St. Maarten celebrated the successful political career of one of her more prominent 'sons of the soil', the other islands of the Netherlands Antilles were commemorating a different historical event: three decades of island self-government. On July 2nd 1951, after the first elections to be held under the 'Island Regulations' of March 3rd 1951, the various local Island Councils had been ceremoniously instated. On St. Maarten alone the subsequent development and elaboration of the political domain was to be dominated by one man. Claude Wathey, 'the Old Man', is still only in his fifties.

The Caribbean provides a particularly interesting area for studying the dynamics of political leadership. The emergence of strong, autocratic, and popular leaders in the context of colonial and post-colonial Caribbean politics has not been an uncommon occurrence. Many of the figures behind the creation of the modern island-states in the area were regarded by large segments of the population as charismatic leaders and folk heroes. Indeed, the leader-follower relationship in Caribbean politics has been characterized by Singham as a hero-crowd relationship in which institutionalisation and participation by the population is minimal:

> "The hero emerges as a leader at a particular stage of colonial evolution, the terminal stage of colonial rule. This period is marked by the advent of universal adult suffrage. It is this sudden emergence of the mass into political life that enables a hero to arise, and which at the same time encourages the caesarist tendencies in this type of leader" (Singham 1968: 319).

The hero is expected to provide benefits for his followers. They, in turn, vote him into power and contribute little else but crowd support and applause. The type of political leader sketched by Singham is analysed in detail for one particular Caribbean society by Klomp in her recent (1983) monograph on politics in Bonaire. Klomp describes Bonaire's political system as a clear example of 'machine politics'. Within the

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formal framework set out in the Statutory regulations of the Antillean political system, parties have come into being. However, political parties in Bonaire do not recruit their members on the basis of a particular ideology or class affiliation. Nor can they be distinguished by the somatic characteristics of their supporters. Bonairean political parties are constituted around the personal following of a political leader: clients, relatives, friends, friends-of-friends and enemies of the opponents (Klomp 1983: 251). Political power in Bonaire is based on a system of patronage, with votes obtained in return for favours granted. Having once gained power, a successful leader is then able to guarantee his party followers a steady flow of favours, services and goods, thus enlarging his personal powerbase and virtually ensuring his future re-election. A quite similar political system has developed on St. Maarten in the course of the past decades.

In the remaining sections I shall sketch the formal structure of the political system on St. Maarten. This includes the relations between the institutions, positions, offices and functions of the political hierarchy as it was instituted over thirty years ago. In the incipient phase of its development politics was to be virtually dominated and moulded by the activities of one man, Claude Wathey. Imposed upon the specific local context of St. Maarten society, the formal system provided the initial impetus as well as the boundary conditions for the evolution of the present system of political clientelism.

Historical Background

The three Windward Islands, St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius are located almost due east of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They belong geographically to the Lesser Antilles island arc enclosing the Caribbean basin to the northeast. The island of St. Maarten is divided into two parts. The northern part, 'French' St. Martin, belongs, with St. Barthélemy ('St. Barts') to the French Département de la Guadeloupe. 'Dutch' St. Maarten, roughly the southern half of the island, has an area of approximately 34 square kms. The Windward Islands, together with the three Leeward Islands, Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, constitute the Netherlands Antilles, an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The two groups of islands are separated by a distance of nearly 900 km.

The economic history of St. Maarten shows a series of rises and falls. The plantation system based on slave labour never attained a level comparable to that of the nearby British and French islands. Sugarcane and cotton replaced tobacco, but even before the abolition of slavery in 1863

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the plantation system was on the wane. Salt winning, a major industry for over 300 years, had ceased to exist by the nineteen-fifties. During the second half of the nineteenth century, at the height of its development, the salt industry employed more than 500 labourers (Keur and Keur 1960).

At the turn of the century a majority of the St. Maarten working population could only find seasonal employment in the sugar industry of the Greater Antilles (Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic), on the island of Sombrero (phosphate mining), and later in Panama, digging the canal. In 1918 a huge oil refinery was established on Curaçao, followed by an equally large installation a few years later on Aruba. As a result the seasonal migration was transformed into a more permanent drift of population. The expanding economy of the Leeward Islands at first attracted mostly young men, later also girls and women. In the years that followed the population of St. Maarten steadily decreased. By 1950, on the eve of the first Island elections, of the 2,078 registered voters born on St. Maarten, 969 were living on Aruba and 629 on Curaçao (Kasteel 1956: 234). Of the 461 St. Maarten-born voters actually living on their home island, a large percentage belonged to the older age groups. The island economy had become dependent on income transferred by postal money order.

As the island economy declined, members of the few dominant indigenous white landowning families moved away. By 1950 the plantocracy of the previous period had disappeared. As described by the Keurs (1960: 247-261), the prime determinants of St. Maarten social structure were economic status, education, and race or 'colour'. Landownership as a criterion had become obsolete. The pattern of social stratification was reflected in the structure of Philipsburg, the capital town.

The town is situated on a narrow sand bar separating the salt pond from the sea. In 1950, the two main streets ran east-west, Frontstreet on the side of the bay, Backstreet on the side of the pond. A small square marked the center of the town. The part of Philipsburg to the east of the square was referred to as 'Upstreet' and contained the government offices, the hospital, the Roman Catholic church, school, and convent, and most of the larger private dwellings. The west side of the town was called 'Downstreet'; it contained many of the poorest houses. The Methodist church, the public school and the two cemeteries — Methodist and Roman Catholic — were also situated Downstreet. The most affluent persons lived Upstreet (and on Frontstreet); in general, persons of lower status lived Downstreet (and on Backstreet). By 1950 a small number of about five family groups referred to as 'Upstreet so-called whites' (Keur

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and Keur 1960: 250) had been able to fill the position at the top of the social hierarchy left vacant by the passing of the plantocracy. With the introduction of local politics, one of these families was to gain pre-eminence, politically and economically, providing the political leader of St. Maarten for the next three decades.

The Context of St. Maarten's Island Politics

The formal structure of the political system on St. Maarten has changed little since its inception in the early nineteen-fifties. In 1981 (as in 1951) the Windward Islands Council was composed of fifteen members, five of whom were elected by each of the three islands for a four-year term. The Lieutenant Governor (*Gezaghebber*) presides over the Council. He is appointed by the Dutch Crown for a period of six years. The Lieutenant Governor resides on St. Maarten. He is represented on Saba and Statia (the vernacular for the island of St. Eustatius) by an Administrator. The daily routine of government on each island is administered by an Executive Council consisting of the Lieutenant Governor (or the Administrator) and two deputies or commissioners elected by the five members of the particular Island Council. As a member of the Executive Council the Lieutenant Governor or the Administrator has a vote; this is not the case when they are chairing the Island Councils or the combined Windward Islands Council. The Executive Council carries out ordinances passed by the Island Council, appoints and discharges local officials, determines their salaries and supervises the local government departments (health, education, public works, etc.). The Lieutenant Governor is also Chief of Police.

One of the more important duties of the three combined Executive Councils (consisting of the Lieutenant Governor, two Administrators, and two Deputies from each island) is to prepare the annual budget. The budget proposal is then submitted to the combined Windward Island Council for discussion and approval before it is sent on to the Central Government in Curaçao.

Government at the local level (the Island Council) and at the level of the island territory (the Windward Islands Council) is supplemented and encompassed by the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles. The legislative branch, the *Staten* or Parliament, is composed of twenty-two members, twelve of whom are from Curaçao, eight from Aruba, one from Bonaire, and one representative for the three Windward Islands. These members are all elected by universal suffrage for a term of four years. Election results are taken into account according to a system of proportionate representation of political parties on Curaçao and Aruba

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and according to a simple majority on Bonaire and the Windward Islands. The first elections for Parliament under the present system were held in 1950. The period leading up to 1950 had seen the legislative system go through various permutations, with changes in the regulation of suffrage, the number of seats in Parliament, and their allocation to the islands or island territories.

For a type of political leadership based on the personalisation of the political system to come into existence, the context of a small-scale society is a necessary condition. St. Maarten of the nineteen-fifties was such a small-scale island society. The total population in 1951 was only 1,478 persons (Tjon Sie Fat 1954: 14-15). Universal adult suffrage had been obtained in 1948. Previously, in order to qualify as a voter, one had to be a male Dutch subject with a minimum of seven years of schooling, and an inhabitant of St. Maarten with real property worth at least *f* 500,— (Kasteel 1956: 46). With the institution of universal suffrage the number of registered voters increased nearly tenfold, from 60 in 1945 to 558 in 1950 (Kasteel 1956: 200, 234). However, in one crucial respect the development of post-colonial St. Maarten society failed to satisfy the conditions required by Singham's hero-crowd paradigm: there was no 'sudden emergence' of the masses into political life. If political leadership on St. Maarten has evolved into a variant of the hero-crowd pattern, it has done so without the parallel evolution and support of populist parties.

As the candidates were postulated for the first polling under the new Island Regulations, no one could have been expected to foresee the political implications of this bizarre system. The format of the voting lists employed in the fifties is interesting. On election day the voter was presented with a ballot on which all the names submitted as candidates were listed under the portrait of the acknowledged party leader. Different lists were distinguished by the use of distinctive party colours; red for the Democrats, blue or green for the Nationals, etc. Although couched in the overt symbolism of a multi-party system (with local party names and emblems corresponding to those of the larger parties on Curaçao and Aruba), local 'parties' could not be differentiated on the basis of a particular ideology or programme. The Keurs described the situation in 1957, after two Island Council elections and one additional election for the *Staten* had been held, as follows (1960: 48):

> The two political parties on the islands are named Democrat and Nationalist. No one, in 1957, could furnish a satisfactory explanation of the difference between them. Several of each said, ''We (Democrat or National) are the friends of the poor. We help the common man'' or ''They (Democrat or National) are corrupt; they stoop low and buy their votes''.

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> It is not surprising, under such circumstances, then, that persons, including candidates, quite readily shift from one party to another before election time, depending on the direction in which the political currents in Curaçao are flowing.

Lists certainly did not represent stable political groupings. A leader considered asking other persons to make up his list on the basis of the personal following they were able to recruit: relatives, neighbours, friends, clients and dependants. As the form and content of interpersonal networks shifted, persons previously on the same list could have become opponents by the time the next election came around. The only secure way for a politician to hold on to his following and even consolidate his position in St. Maarten society was to be consistently on the winning side. The party winning the Island Council elections by a simple majority chose the two Island Commissioners and thus gained control of the Executive Council and the redistribution of island resources. In practice the majority faction of the five-member Island Council always combined the legislative and executive functions by proposing two of their own members as Deputies. As the office of member of Parliament was also compatible with a seat on the Island Council, by concentrating the political power adhering to different positions and institutions, a three-man faction could easily dominate all levels of local island politics and gain direct access to the arena of national politics. Indeed, given the chaotic context of Antillean national politics, the member of Parliament for the Windward Islands was often in an extremely favourable position, holding the balance of power in successive coalition governments.

In the fifties the Windward Islands budget produced a persistent and large annual deficit. A favourite ploy of the combined Island Councils was to overestimate the deficit for the coming year, accept the budget proposal and pass it on to the Central Government in the expectation of pruning. Budget cuts are decided upon in Parliament, with the Central Government bearing the ultimate political and financial responsibility for the budget deficits of the poorer islands. After the budget is accepted, the Island Councils have the right to dispose of the money thus assigned as they please. They may change every single item on their original proposal, provided they remain within the bounds of the accepted deficit. In practice this system enabled the Island Councils (i.e., the Deputies) to consolidate their position with their supporters and clients.

Opposition leaders on St. Maarten are in an unenviable position. By definition, they are not in power. They may seek to win over the electorate by pointing to instances of corruption and blatant favouritism by the ruling politicians. However, to a large extent, their own followers will only pledge support with the expectation that they, in turn, will

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receive similar preferential treatment if and when their leaders are voted into office. After an unsuccessful bid for power, the personal following of an opposition leader tends to evaporate, with some ex-supporters seeking an accomodation with the leaders of the (re)elected party.

Conclusion

As St. Maarten moved into the sixties, details of the picture sketched above would change. For reasons of space, in this chapter I have not attempted to relate the development of politics either to aspects of the existing pattern of social stratification (based on colour and class), or to the structural effects of large-scale inter-island migration. These themes will be taken up at a later date. However, as the island became more prosperous, gradually at first through the effect of welfare projects worth millions of guilders, then more rapidly through the development of its huge tourist potential, the foundations of the present highly evolved system of political patronage had already been laid. The first trickle of resources would increase to a flood; the political machinery for manipulating the flow was already in place.

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JEREMY BOISSEVAIN

RHETORIC AS A RESOURCE: MALTA'S DOM MINTOFF[1]

Every successful 'Big-Man' must occasionally speak in public, whether to plead his own cause or to defend those of his followers. His object is to persuade and influence his audience. He often does this by showing that his message is merely a commonsense extension of already accepted truths. This is certainly true of Dom Mintoff, Malta's peppery and persuasive socialist prime minister, who has been a major figure on the island's political scene for more than forty years. I attempt to analyse his very successful rhetorical techniques by examining one of his speeches. The idiom of the Mintoff speech that I have selected is *ghaqal*, a basic Maltese virtue: a combination of reason, soundness, respect for money, and the ability to make the best of any situation. I have space only to summarise aspects of the speech and place it in its 1976 social context — and pay attention also to the man and the charisma he exercises over Maltese audiences[2].

Malta

Malta is composed of three islands, Malta, Gozo and Comino, covering an area of 250 square kms. With a total population of just over 318,000, Malta is one of the smallest and most densely populated countries in the world. For centuries the islands were ruled by a highly centralised civil/military administration centred in Valletta, Malta's capital. This centralised government also continued after independence from Britain (1964). In 1976 government employed some 25,000 persons, who, with the exception of police, teachers and a few others all worked in the capital. There is a national parliament but there are no mayors or town councils.

Politics in Malta are pursued with great vigour and cut deeply into all spheres of social activity. The intense social control and the ideological cleavage between the two major parties — the Nationalist Party and the Malta Labour Party (MLP) — have worked against the formation of smaller parties. This has usually ensured a stable majority government. Party politics have always reflected a strong class bias. During the recent past this was mixed in many fascinating combinations with nationalism and anti-colonialism.

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In 1971, the working-class MLP replaced the Nationalist Party, the party of landowners, traders, civil servants and established professionals. The Nationalists piloted the country safely through the difficult first years of independence. During most of its period in office (1962-1971), it received considerable support from the Roman Catholic Church in Malta. This held, and still holds, an immensely powerful force among the overwhelmingly Catholic population. In the 1960s the Church and the groups it supported frightened many people of the socialist leanings of the Labour Party. The Church's impressive arsenal of moral, political and religious sanctions ensured Labour's electoral defeat. Then in 1969 the Church and the MLP overcame their differences and signed the equivalent of a peace treaty. This freed sufficient voters for the MLP to gain a slender victory in the 1971 elections, and again in 1976 and 1981.

For centuries Malta's economy had been based on supplying services and goods to the military and naval garrisons of its rulers. Following the post independence decline of the defence establishment in Malta, government began to develop alternative economic possibilities. In the mid-60s the arrival of new industries and mass tourism sparked off an economic boom.

Not all benefits of this economic prosperity were evenly distributed. Wage rates of white-collar workers and industrial labourers lagged behind employees in tourism, building and manufacturing, creating considerable tension. Newly prosperous industrial managers, property speculators and contractors began to eclipse the traditional elite of professionals, higher civil servants and traders. The new textile and electronic industries hired mainly women because they accepted lower wages, thus increasing male unemployment. Perhaps the most acutely felt consequence was the severe housing shortage created by the exploding demand for accommodation by tourists and by those seeking to retire to Malta's offerings of tax concessions and a pleasant climate. The shortage priced all but the wealthiest Maltese right out of the market, feeding smouldering class antagonism. Employment, care for the socially handicapped, housing, and economic independence became the issues in the 1971 elections. They continued to furnish themes for Mintoff's speeches during the 1976 election campaign as well, for he could point to what his government had accomplished.

Dom Mintoff

Dominic Mintoff was born in the industrial heart of the Grand Harbour area in 1916. His parents were working-class, and his father served as a mess attendant in the Royal Navy. Mintoff was briefly a student at

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the Archbishop's Seminary and completed his education at the Government Lyceum and the Royal University of Malta. He obtained his B.Sc. in 1937, and a degree in engineering and architecture in 1939. He then received a Rhodes scholarship and earned a M.A. in engineering at Oxford in 1941. After working as a civil engineer in Britain from 1941-1943, he returned to Malta and was appointed General Secretary of the MLP in 1944. In 1945 he was elected as a Member of the Council of Government, which prepared the way for the reintroduction of the Maltese Parliament, to which he was elected in 1947. That year he also married Moyra de Vere Bentinck, the daughter of a prominent British Fabian socialist family. He took over the leadership of the MLP in 1949 after a bitter internal faction dispute. He has held this post ever since.

Upon assuming the leadership, he set about moulding the party into a sound organisation based on village-level clubs. Between 1955 and 1958, he was the Prime Minister of Malta, and afterwards leader of the opposition until the MLP was re-elected to power in 1971. He has been the Prime Minister ever since. Under his leadership the organisation of the MLP was strengthened. He became the party's chief symbol, its undisputed leader. His tactical skill, knowledge of the local political scene, his eloquence and energy all combine to endow him with unprecedented power.

Mintoff's Charisma

Mintoff unquestionably has charisma. To begin with, he is hard driving, energetic and tough. After 450 years of rule designed to produce docile subjects and gentle christians, such qualities are as admired as they are scarce. Mintoff works long hours, and expects others to do likewise. He can be harsh, even cruel, verbally lashing and battering, punishing where he encounters opposition or incompetence. He is respected and feared. Subordinates consequently pass all major decisions up to him, thereby increasing his already considerable power. Above all he is firm, rarely admitting error, consulting with few. Yet, if the occasion demands, he can be immensely charming and hospitable. He radiates an aura of confidence, of knowing exactly what he wants and what he is doing. He behaves, in short, like an extremely authoritarian father, a figure familiar to all Maltese. Most of them have grown up in and form part of families dominated by such fathers.

Mintoff is also physically tough. Although over sixty, he runs up stairs, swims daily in the summer, water skis, rides horseback and bowls, all with great vigour. His physical toughness was epitomised for many by his 1974 riding accident. He was kicked unconscious by his horse,

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hospitalised and required thirty-five stitches. The impact of the horseshoe was clearly visible when he appeared on television shortly afterwards. Many people do not get up after being kicked in the head by a stallion. Yet Mintoff's survival was no more than most people expected. Such is his image of toughness.

This toughness and his willingness to strike hard and swiftly have stood him in good stead in negotiating. He ordered followers to cut down cable radio poles all over the island when the British governor refused to recall a message barring Maltese fishing boats from a bay during the 1956 Suez crisis. Fifteen years later he drove the British off the island because they would not meet his new terms for their use of the military base. When he threatens action he does not bluff. This firmness is much admired by the working-class Maltese of today. For them, Mintoff is a man's man. He has become something of a cult object. Though he has now given up smoking, during the '50s and '60s his pipe became his personal symbol. Bowling (*bocce*) and horseback riding became popular sports in Malta after Mintoff took them up. Even his style of dressing is copied. Many devotees have taken to wearing a giant belt-buckle in imitation of the prime minister. If he wears a tie, all his associates put on one, even in hot weather. If he appears without one, they remove theirs.

Keeping people off balance appears to be one of his techniques of ruling. Will he wear a tie or come with an open collar? Uncertainty prevails. Visitors are summoned suddenly, often late at night, to discuss weighty matters. Dignitaries invited to his country cottage for Sunday lunch are often disconcerted by his working class table guests, or completely confused when he disappears into the kitchen with cronies for the duration of the visit. What will Mintoff do next?

His person, his style, even his idiosyncracies have become Labour Party symbols. Labour supporters are *mintoffjani*, mintoffians. Most of them are devoted and obey unquestioningly. This provides him with a comfortable base of support, which could, if necessary, be formed into a fist. He is the undisputed leader. Like the traditional Maltese father, he is aloof, manly, harsh, and looks after his own (Boissevain 1979).

Mintoff's Rhetoric

It is generally acknowledged both by Mintoff's supporters and his enemies that he is the island's first orator. He applies his rhetorical skills in both private and public spheres. As mentioned, his private confrontations with party officials, ministers and the senior civil servants who surround him are often harsh. His public appearances, however, fall into a number of distinct categories, each of which is characterised by its own

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rhetorical style. There are the semi-public annual party conferences, during which he is normally at his persuasive best. Then there are the parliamentary debates in which he is both persuasive and eloquent, if the occasion demands, but often also harsh, sarcastic and crude. In parliament, he is masterly at finding a small chink in his opponents' defense, often regarding a minor issue, and then exploiting it. In the ensuing debate the main issue is ignored, and his opponents are kept off balance by his ferocious heckling. Nationalist members of parliament and leading lawyers have told me that they consider themselves fortunate that Mintoff is not a lawyer or he would deprive them of their choicest cases. In addition, Mintoff makes periodic appearances on television and at specially arranged outdoor meetings. His television appearances are usually serious, benign and statesman-like. He dresses conservatively. He announces new targets or economic measures, or reports some achievement. Armed with detailed statistics, he can be very persuasive. As a critical columnist noted, "The Prime Minister must be the only person in the whole wide world who can make a sizeable increase in the price of gas and electricity sound as if it were a sizeable decrease" (*Sunday Times of Malta* 24.2.74).

Mintoff's outdoor speeches provide both information and entertainment. Among several speakers stated to appear, he is usually the last. He arrives towards the end of the preceding speech, which is interrupted by cheers and whistles as Mintoff takes his place on the podium. This serves to emphasise to all, including the speaker, who is number one. When he rises to speak, the audience breaks into a deafening din of whistles and firecrackers. He holds up his hand for silence. When he finally lowers it, he smiles and greets them with "*Merhba*!" ("welcome!").

He begins slowly in a friendly, paternal tone. This is always refreshing, following, as it does, the frenzied demagoguery and ranting styles of the earlier speakers. He is at his best attacking his opponents. His style is slow, direct and clear, and his messages are repeated several times. His speeches are good entertainment. He delights in amusing his audience by telling stories that ridicule the Nationalists or remind them of some simple aspect of the poverty that both he and they shared in the past. He is vague about just how far in the past, thus telescoping time, and building a bridge between then and now, between them and him. He does this by saying: "I remember when I was small ..." and goes on to describe how, before the war, vendors used to sell the 'gash' (leftovers) collected from naval kitchens, how people used to eat pieces of bread as big as pillows, how fishermen shuffled down to their boats in the early morning. These reminiscences are told in an amusing fashion. Mintoff telegraphs the humour by his chuckles and the tone of his voice.

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The experiences are accurately described, and so shared with the poorer members of his audience. They create a direct bond between him and the predominantly working-class audience: he and they have known poverty. Mintoff then goes on to build his argument on this shared experience.

Mintoff is also noted for his frequent use of direct simple similes and crude humour. A dilapidated army barracks can be converted to a holiday camp in the same way as a dash of lipstick converts a tired woman into a tart. The nationalisation of foreign firms is no more complicated than getting cows at bargain prices and milking them. Direct and simple comparisons, but chosen because many also have sexual overtones.

Sometimes Mintoff must also pass on unpleasant news. Normally he does this swiftly, seizing a sudden crisis as a lever to implement a long-planned but unpopular measure. Thus the oil crisis in 1974 was used to increase government revenue from petrol; a crisis threatening two local banks resulted in their nationalisation to protect the people's savings; student unrest in 1977, generated by failure to open the medical school on time (because staff had been sacked as part of Mintoff's confrontation with doctors over planned national health measures), provided the occasion to introduce a long contemplated reorganisation of tertiary education. In short he converts crises into opportunities with the aid of his rhetorical skills.

Mintoff can also face unpleasant crises directly. Perhaps the best-known local crisis, which he met head on, occurred in 1973 when he faced the dockyard workers. They are normally the hard core of his support in his own constituency. The government-owned dockyard, Malta's largest industry, was rapidly losing money. The metal workers were the most militant section of the pro-Labour General Workers Union. They rejected all proposals to rationalise the yard's wasteful, permissive set-up, a legacy of Royal Navy overstaffing and union muscle. Union officials could not budge them. Furious, Mintoff decided to speak directly to the workers. He called a meeting to take place in the square just outside the dockyard's entrance. Contrary to his usual casual dress at public meetings, he faced them in a dark suit, white shirt and tie, emphasising his distance from them and the seriousness of his message.

A large audience had gathered from all over Malta. The dockyard workers that attended formed a minority group at the far end of the square. He accused them of laziness, dishonesty and irresponsibility. He jarred his audience by telling them that the dockworkers had no balls. A crude, powerful message to Mediterranean men. They booed him. He then gave them three choices. He would resign, he would declare the yard bankrupt, or they would do exactly as he said. He required them to give an immediate answer. He was in a hurry. They had of course little

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choice, for the entire situation was stage-managed. He asked those who did not want him to remain to raise their hand. No one did. He then asked who wanted to declare the yard bankrupt. Again no one raised a hand. He then stated the vote on the third choice was not necessary. This was rhetoric on a grand scale. The dockyard's work set-up was rationalised, and for a short time reportedly made a profit. (In 1984 it was running at a loss.)

Usually Mintoff's public speeches are much more pleasant occasions. They consist mainly of a sustained attack on the Nationalists, a report on the Labour Party's progress and, sometimes, plans for the future. He adjusts his rhetoric to his particular audience. His public speech at St. George's square, Hal-Qormi on Saturday, March 27th, 1976 was a typical example.

Introducing the Speech at Hal-Qormi

Hal-Qormi (pronounce 'Hal or me') is a town with a population of some 15,000 peasants, industrial labourers, small businessmen, rural entrepreneurs, and bakers. The town has a reputation for being populated by extremely hard-working, money-minded people of peasant or working-class backgrounds, who are moving up the economic ladder through their own efforts. There are many poor people in the town, but there are also many rough-and-ready entrepreneurs who have become wealthy in one or two generations.

It was a well-attended mass meeting. Supporters had come by cars and hired buses from all over Malta. As is usual, most *local* Labour sympathisers, except hard-core *mintoffjani*, stayed in the background. They listened from doorways, half-closed windows and side streets. In a village it never pays to be too obvious about anything. Mintoff came late, looking fit and energetic. He was ressed in a leather jacket and open shirt, the Labour torch on his huge belt buckle reflecting the cold March light.

The speech can be roughly divided into three parts: the first is a rebuttal of the Nationalist's criticism that his government is miserly and has built no hotels; the second part demonstrates the working of state capitalism: government not only saves but also makes money. The final section is an exhortation to vote socialist in the forthcoming election.

Mintoff begins with a resounding attack on the Nationalists and their earlier government under Borg Olivier. At issue is Nationalists' criticism that the Labour government failed to provide a suitable climate for investment by not offering incentives to investors: it had refused to provide grants to hotels, causing hotel building to come to a halt. Mintoff seizes this issue. He easily demonstrates that many hotels have been opened

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during the Labour period in office. Tourist arrivals have doubled. In the process of elaborating this point, he scores other points off his rivals, and sidesteps the underlying issue: government policy on industrial investment. He ridicules his opponents for having wasted money with their grants for hotels. Imagine, giving huge presents of the people's money to rich people to help to make them even richer! Here he stresses the already widely-held disapproval of the Nationalist subsidy scheme.

Mintoff does not stop there. To emphasise his point, he provides other examples of the wastefulness of his rivals. He ridicules their high-living junketing — imagine charging the people for their haircuts! He leaves much unsaid that is common knowledge as he has been over this ground with them many times before. He chuckles over the fact that his rivals have taken a substantial drop in income since they left government, alluding to kick-backs and so on. Many are unable to leave, he suggests, because there may be other impediments to departure besides poverty, such as involvement in *sub judice* law cases. He skilfully relates a third example of waste through subservience to Britain: the Nationalist squandered public funds on a hotel-sized kitchen that was used only for the Queen's visit.

Next he converts the charge of government 'miserliness' into a compliment. He is 'honoured' to be considered miserly with the people's money. He goes on to show that the policy of not subsidising hotel building actually benefits the people since the slowdown in hotel building provides tenants for their empty houses. In a final thrust he states that everyone inevitably was tarred by the brush of bribery during the Nationalist period of easy money.

Well away now, he launches into the main section of his speech: the new enterprises his government has created for the people of Malta. He is in fact setting out how state capitalism works. At the same time he gives a lesson in *ghaqal*, making the best of every situation. He begins by showing how something profitable can be created out of a wreck. An abandoned military camp is transformed into a holiday camp. Here he gives off a few sexual allusions that greatly amuse his audience. Fixing up an old barrack is like making up a woman; implicit in this is that if an old woman paints herself up to make money, she is a prostitute. He is on to a very good thing, and the crowd is delighted. He slides over to another sexual metaphor: ''Instead of the people paying taxes to have schools ... we get a military camp — and now *whenever we find a cow, we 'll milk it*''. Here the sexual innuendo is clearer, for the Maltese word for cow is slang for prostitute. To milk a cow thus also means to live off a prostitute's earnings. Milking is also sexual exploitation, as when a man 'milks' his wife of strength by giving her too many children. The audience roundly applauds his verbal sleight of tongue.

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In building up to his metaphor, Mintoff gets in a dig at the British, which is aimed at boosting local pride. He is able to furnish the Holiday Village free of charge. This is because when he threw the British out in 1971, they fled so hurriedly that they left behind their bombs and furnishings. Left unsaid, because it is self-evident to his audience is: "Look how we made our former masters jump!". The Maltese sense of humour is often at someone else's expense.

Having found his splendid milking metaphor, Mintoff now works it for all it is worth. Various fat 'cows' such as banks, the airline, shipping and the dockyard are turned over to the Minister of Finance, Guzé Abela. 'Gúz' (pronounced 'Jews') is told over and over to milk them, to drain them, to exploit them. In the process Mintoff milks his audience for applause. The crowd loves it. It appreciates not only the crude innuendo, but also the way he plays with it: cows' milk buys milk for children. The public likes being told Malta is getting something for nothing. Moreover, Air Malta and Sea Malta have freed Maltese to a considerable extent from dependence upon outside carriers, an autonomy that is vital for a small-island economy. Mintoff is proud of having achieved this, and so are most Maltese.

Discussing the dockyard, Mintoff points again to the supposed subservience of the Nationalists to Britain. A wealthy titled Englishman is paid £M 150,000 a year for running the dockyard. He evokes a Nationalist conspiracy of politics and big business by referring to their prime minister as *Capo*, mafia boss. (This is a standard Labour rhetorical cue for the crowd to boo the Nationalists for their alleged corruption.)

The Church is another of Mintoff's regular targets. Members of the Labour party at all levels still carry with them wounds inflicted by the Church in the 1960s (Boissevain 1965). Mintoff needs only brush the keys to evoke sympathetic chords from his followers.

Next, Mintoff slowly begins to build up his final 'vote socialist' exhortation. In his lifetime the gap between rich and poor has been reduced considerably, and it will continue to shrink as Malta becomes more socialist. He appeals directly to the people, reminiscing about a childhood neighbour, a fisherman. He evokes neighbourhood patriotism from his constituents, stressing that he too was brought up in a popular quarter in Bormla. He suggests shared poverty in the past by his detailed description of the fisherman's humble fare. In setting out the poverty and danger fishermen are exposed to, he manages to carry forward the sexual theme begun earlier, for the little fish which are caught, *għarajjes*, is also Maltese for brides. Laughing, he explains that he did not mean the ones you marry off. There was a good bit of ribaldry exchanged at that point, to the public's great delight.

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After setting out further steps that he is taking to attain greater self-sufficiency in food production, he winds up by castigating the Nationalists again for squandering the people's money through corruption and bad investments. Reaching the climactic final section, he urges his audience to vote socialist. He ends with a rhetorical question about the future, to which the crowd roars its answer.

It is evident that Mintoff is able to make his political messages acceptable because he uses a simple clear style of presentation and starts from a shared experience in poverty. His economic measures make sense to the peasants and the working class. The central themes of the MLP record in protecting people's money and state capitalism are aptly chosen for his audience of farmers, rural entrepreneurs, labourers, bakers and small businessmen. Past poverty was not God's will, as the Church has argued, and the gap between rich and poor is now closing. Mintoff not only provides an afternoon's entertainment, he also reduces complex national economic affairs to the sort of everyday financial issues his audience is used to deal with. Rhetorically, national finance becomes no more complex than farming or trading: he sets his Minister of Finance to milk the rich cows he has so shrewdly obtained for Malta at bargain rates. State capitalism is a commonsense extension of peasant *ghaqal*.

His simple, basic and often crude humour is also perfectly attuned to his audience's taste and level of education. His rivals, even colleagues from his own party, lack this touch. *Their* public speeches are full of facts and figures, attack and parry, but with little or no humour. But Mintoff's are occasions for the faithful to hear their leader, to see him, to laugh with him at the expense of the opposition. A Mintoff speech strengthens bonds of solidarity, as people physically become part of a movement of thousands. Isolated voters are united into a group. The transcendental verities he preaches are self-determination, pride in self, patriotism, and care for the people's money.

His rhetorical skill is a major political resource.

NOTES

1 After the article had been submitted, Dom Mintoff has resigned as Prime Minister of Malta (note of the editors).

2 A draft of this paper was first presented to a colloquium Robert Paine organised on "Politicians and their Public" at the Harlow (Essex) campus of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, September 5th-9th, 1976. I am grateful to Robert Paine, the colloquium's dynamic organiser, to the participants, and to Kola Muscat, Les Collins, Bertus Hendriks, Jojada and Kitty Verrips, Peter Serracino Inglott, Jean Killick, Gemma Cachia, Edward Zammit, Hannie Hoekstra and Anne Busuttil for

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their help in various ways to the discussion. Shortcomings in translation and interpretation are, of course, strictly my responsibility.

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PART THREE

CONCLUSIONS

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MARTIN VAN BAKEL, RENÉE HAGESTEIJN,
PIETER VAN DE VELDE

'BIG-MAN': FROM PRIVATE POLITICS TO POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The studies on the 'Big-Man' phenomenon collected in this volume have shed a new light on it, at least to the editors. The new ideas we got from working over the multifaceted data collected by various disciplines are still immature, but by writing them down here, we shall try to further our understanding of the subject.

When we started our work on this volume, we were convinced of the reality of 'Big-Men', and of the appropriateness of the term to convey a theoretical concept which could unambiguously be applied in many empirical situations. We knew of course that sometimes 'Big-Men' do occur along with other leaders in the same society; however, as far as we were concerned, these were exceptions rather than normal situations. Now, basing ourselves on the data in this volume we have come to consider 'Big-Man' as one manifestation of leadership in the political arena of any empirical society, occurring *simultaneously* with other types of power. Support for this view can be found in other, recent anthropological literature (Baker 1983), too: in an historical analysis (Lindstrom 1981) and in a comparative ethnographical study (Allen 1984). The cases in the present volume provided the initial evidence to us, though. We will return to this point of simultaneous but different power definitions below.

If then, 'Big-Men' were less exclusive per society, we also found them to differ between societies, even within single societies. In simple words, empirical 'Big-Men' were not BIG MEN (the anthropological concept) everywhere, to our astonishment. Again, support can be (and has been) found in the literature (cf. Kloos, this vol.; also Lindstrom 1984); still, we do not think that this observation has been worked out to its full consequences. We can only give a rough sketch of an explanation; we emphasise that it should be considered and discussed further before being accepted. This explanatory sketch (Renfrew 1982, Hempel 1964: 424) should also serve to endorse our first change of mind above.

To put the concept of 'Big-Man' — as we understand it now — into its proper perspective, we think it is necessary to divide the whole field of politics into two fairly distinct arenas. First, common to all societies is a

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political domain in a broad sense; it is the domain where the issues of social production and reproduction of society and its constituent units are being sorted out. Concurrent with different scales of the units, political processes operate at different levels; households, for instance, have interests which differ from lineage concerns; sectorial organisations have wider interests than territorial groups, etc. The expression, weighing and allocation of rights and obligations towards labour, technology, resources and products occurs in corresponding scales and levels. The many analytically distinguishable strands of interest are twined in practice to more comprehensive partial interests: for some units biological reproduction, for others the production of crops, and for yet other groups the management of technology may be at stake. Some of these local or sub-domains of interests will be organised formally, the majority very informally, however. Leadership within this field is associated with the loci where decisions are made regarding these interests; it is from these places or organisational knots, that 'power' is generated. Thus, kin-politics at the household or lineage level may be negotiated according to the formal rules of a well-thought out kinship system, and/or they may be worked out via backroom lobbying of family heads and the concoctions of the village matrons. Similarly the politics of a modern state are the substance of both formal bureaucratic and much informal or backroom scheming. It is the historical situation which causes the definition of the sub-domains, and the selection of the strands of interest that will be managed jointly by one institution. It is also the historical chance which 'determines' the development of formal institutions in one social field rather than in other social domains (Bloemers, this volume). And this applies to every 'level' of societal evolution.

Whenever in a society an institutionalised and explicit concern with the allocation of rights and obligations exists vis à vis the productive forces — labour, resources, technology — the products, and/or an important part thereof, then there is also a political domain-in-the-narrow-sense in that society: the second arena discerned here. This concern is manifest in the existence of a (number of) formal political organisation(s). It is a historical chance which idiom is used for dealing with the political issues; it is also an historical chance how this political domain is defined in any given society, or/and which mix the various sub-interests make up in this explicit (or formal) sphere. Thus, in some societies the (or a) religious organisation may be the cover-up for the management of many of the political issues in a narrow sense (cf. *Opus Dei* in Spain), in other formations different organisations may jointly manage an important part of the interests (e.g. an age-grade system, in combination with a lineage organisation). Still, even in a highly

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organised society a wide informal domain remains outside the recognised political sphere, where interests are mediated by so-called 'non-political' institutions. Insignificant as this informal political sphere may be thought of in society ('emically', so) even when its effects are seen in the formal sphere it is hardly ever explicitly acknowledged (e.g. the Jewish lobby in the U.S.A.).

This distinction into twin political domains is not new of course; better formulations have already been found with Marx and many others after him (in this volume: Strating and Uhlenbeck). We think it relevant to bring up the point, though, as consequently political leadership is not necessarily tied to explicit organisations, not even to explicit political organisations. Leadership is found where decisions are made about any aspect of the socio-economic processes, and where not all concerned partake in the mediation. Moreover, just as it is nothing but a historical chance how a leader is appointed, how leaders are recruited, or what the rules of the game are in the competition for leadership (cf. Teunis in this volume), so seniority may be required to get higher into the kin hierarchy, lineage membership may restrict the competition for chiefship or presidency, violence may be the rule to decide who will boss a street gang, and commercial insight may be the necessary and sufficient condition for top managers — they may and do occur side by side within the same society. Similarly, it is a historical chance which characteristics are grouped with each of the various forms of leadership in a society (compare e.g. the contributions to this volume by Van Bakel, Bloemers, Hagesteijn, Teunis and Van der Vliet who — from their various backgrounds — all have problems with the definition of leadership with respect to their cases). Hence, when in one society the characteristics of the 'Big-Man' are different from those in another society, then this comes up to the expectations: empirical social formations are not moulded to anthropological ideal types. The co-occurrence of the ascribed position of chief and the achieved position of a 'Big-Man' in the same society (or of achievement within a group itself selected through ascription; or of ascribed 'Big-Men' and achieved chiefs, for that matter) should be understood from the same perspective. The political scene may be even more complex through the simultaneous existence of elderly and expedient leaderships (Baker, this volume; also 1983; Lindstrom 1984). We repeat and emphasise: the way of recruitment, the definition of politics in-a-narrow-sense are both subject to historical variation, as is the sub-division of the wider political domain. To us, questions like 'are patrons (or *caciques*, or *shamans*, or entrepreneurs, or whosoever) to be grouped under the heading 'Big-Man'?', are entirely beside the point: it is not typology that matters, but rather the explanation of the divisions

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within a society and the dynamics of the political domain of that society; the recognition of the various overt and covert aspects of political leadership, and why these. Classification or typology should be used as a means to answer research questions, not as ends in themselves.

Finally, from an evolutionary viewpoint 'Big-Man' systems as a preamble towards more complicated forms, or as the step following egalitarian society can be abandoned. Apart from the by now academic question of the existence of non-ranking systems, the general point of omnipresence of the political domain implies political institutions, however small in scale. Even though 'original society' may have been quite affluent (Sahlins 1972), it has had to cope with reproductive problems of a fundamental kind: women were widely dispersed (e.g. Gamble 1983). For the management of denser societal formats (Claessen and Van de Velde 1984; Claessen, Van de Velde and Smith 1985) the political domain (*sensu lato*) had to be further institutionalised. The attendant leadership definition and the emergent political field (*sensu stricto*) may show some dominant form of selection of characteristics, *probably with alternative combinations all along with it*, both in the formal and in the informal sphere. For instance, if the amalgamation of a number of small lineages may in some instances be thought of as 'the cause' of the denser format, then at the very least some territorial problems will have to be worked out; we would not be able, though, to specify a hypothesis about what sociological characteristics a mediator in this field must possess. Conversely, Friedman (1981) presents a theory how chiefly institutions may evolve to 'Big-Man' systems: when exotic valuables become extremely scarce (or abundant — it is the relative scarcity which is manipulated) new ways of defining power may emerge, generally away from chiefly, more or less conservative standards. Although we would now rephrase this theory in terms of the dominance of certain characteristics of leadership within a society, Friedman's statement is much to the point here: chieftaincies may eventually evolve into 'Big-Man' societies. This runs counter to traditional evolutionary theory. As the reverse is also thinkable (if only because of its place in traditional evolutionism), it follows that a separate 'Big-Man' stage in the general, socio-political evolution of society is apparently *not* a theoretical necessity and can therefore be omitted, *pace* Service 1975.

Summing up: whether or not 'Big-Man' is a meaningful category remains dependent upon the theoretical context in which it is used: as an ideal type 'Big-Man' is virtually coterminous with achieved status — and therefore superfluous. If in an ethnological analysis different forms of leadership need different labels, why not use 'Big-Man'? We suggest a theoretical definition in such cases. Apparently, the 'Big-Man'

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phenomenon is neither a valid empirical generalisation of Melanesian ethnographic data nor is it a label for a separate category or stage in evolutionary theory. As the articles in this volume demonstrate these points from other places and periods, too, 'Big-Man' had better be abandoned to the history of political anthropology to allow a more meaningful view of leadership to emerge.

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